

PORTRAITS OF STAGE FAVORITES

SMITH'S

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SHORT
STORIES

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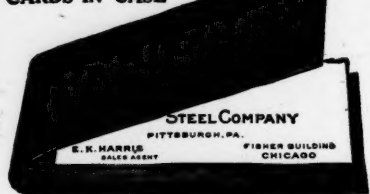
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Vol. XI

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 2

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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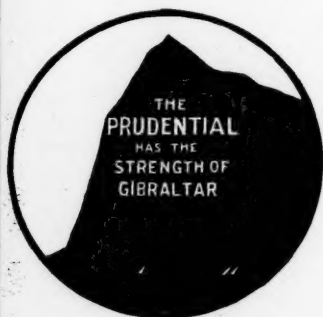
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MAY, 1910

NEW YORK



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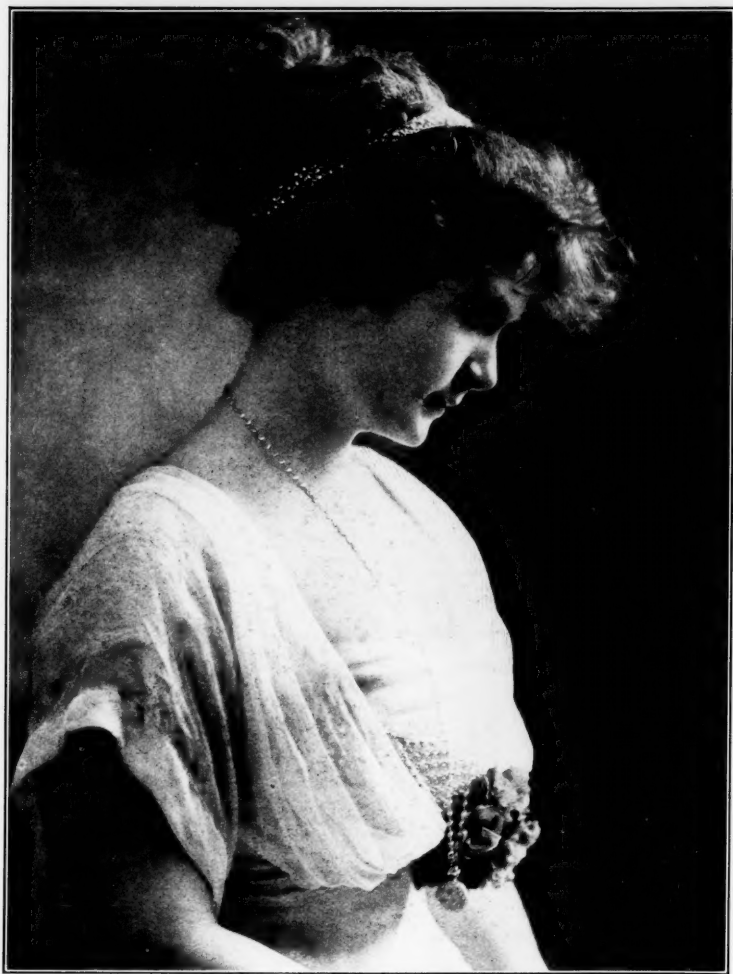


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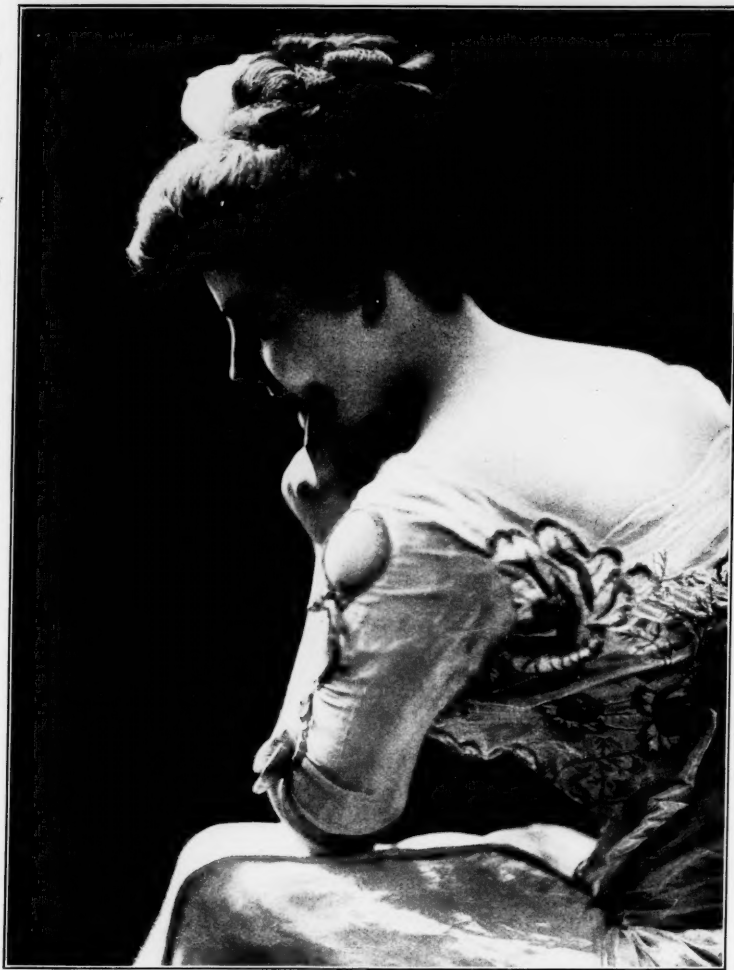


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Starring in "Springtime"



A Florida Freeze

By Susie Bouchelle Wight

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

CHAPTER I.

IT was the summer after "the freeze," that epochal event from which everything dates in Florida, and the people had not yet sufficiently recovered from their shock of surprise and bewilderment to dig into that black cloud, and, turning it inside out, see that the law of compensation still held good. Where there was money enough left to go away with, the grove owners had gone "back home"; others had sold out for a song, and gone elsewhere, and only those remained who were compelled to.

It was one of those hot, lifeless days, when the grasshopper would have been a burden, if even those sprightly insects could have hopped from under cover. I stood on my front porch with an open letter in my hand—a letter I had trudged through a mile of sun and sand to get; I would not drive horses that I could not feed. I looked out across what once had been one of the finest small groves in the county. Where once had stood those beautiful trees in all their symmetrical splendor of green, and ivory, and gold, was a waste of weeds almost as high as my head. Blackened brush rose now and then above the weeds to mark where the trees had been, and occasional exuberant sprouts of wild orange dominated the ruins.

My two lean horses, with cuckle burrs thick and bristling in manes and tails, were nosing around disgustedly in search of a tender blade of grass—for even the beggar weed was now too

tough for them to munch, and they had not seen oats or corn for weeks. Blossom, my pretty little Jersey cow, lay in the shade of the packing house, fighting off the flies with her tail. She had quite forgotten the taste of bran, and, as I surveyed her, I knew full well that she would not probably have so much as a pint of milk for me when night came. Near her, wallowing in the dust, were a few hens, ragged-looking things! I had been farmer long enough to know that hens did not shed their fathers, and lay eggs at the same season of the year, and I wondered how I was to subsist. I couldn't eat horse, I drew the line at Blossom also and the disreputable hens; and the sweet potatoes were all gone—and I had failed to plant for a new crop! The tomatoes were all scorched up in the blistering August sunshine, I had exhausted the possibilities of LeConte pears; and my whole being repudiated the suggestion of another meal of corn bread and fish—I had eaten them so long!

I think the mocking birds must have been singing in my great oak trees—they usually were—but I did not hear them, nor had I eyes for the blue lake shimmering through the woods, or the roses running riot at my feet, the little, hard scrubby things the crackers called "rock roses." I was facing what looked like starvation for woman and beast, and hot as it was I shivered as a turkey buzzard wheeled low over the horizon, and then soared aloft in disregard of the blazing sun.

"I wish I had stayed in Maine and

coughed myself decently to death!" I said it aloud, and then laughed hysterically. I never had talked aloud to myself before, and my voice sounded strange in that lonely, desolate house, but because I had begun it, I finished my outspoken thought. "It is awful to think of dying by inches—and I'm too big a coward to put a quick ending to it all—or *am* I?" I tried to consider that question calmly, but the mere thought of it was too much for me, and I turned loose. I cried—I howled, I sobbed, there by myself, and I think I pounded my head on the floor as I used to do when I was a bad little girl with father and mother to forbid me things for my own good. I know that I demanded of God that He should explain His mismanagement of my affairs.

Three years before, I had but the wraith of a body, but plenty where-withal to provide abundantly for its wants. To-day, with a body sound and well from head to foot, I had on my hands a worthless orange grove, a mere waste of Florida sand, and a letter from the bank up home, informing me that the little bank stock which I had been husbanding so carefully, starving myself and my horses in order to retain it, was all gone up in a failure, and that my bit of a home place in Maine would have to go, along with property of other stockholders, to make good the deposits.

I had toiled my heart out that summer, over a tomato crop which had netted me twenty-six cents in postage stamps, and had tried to live most frugally—just live along, until the earth cooled enough to sprout truck seed instead of baking it. I looked at the local color on my hands and arms, and cried some more. Time was, when they had not only been round, but white and soft, and there had been friends to tell me so. What mattered it that they were brown and scarred with strange work for a woman's hands to do!

It had been three weeks since I had spoken to a living soul. I went to the post office sometimes, but the postmaster was a crusty old fellow who did

not believe in wasting words, and he would only shake his head at me, or poke out such circulars and things as came. I had no mind to swap hard-luck stories with the idlers at the store, so I went in and out silently. I had reread every novel on my shelves, and even attempted to dig into philosophy, but when a healthy body is crying out for food, and a gregarious nature is craving the interchange of friendly look and word, it is hard to concentrate on a book.

And there were my horses—my pets—my splendid bays, starving before my eyes. I looked across the weeds at them and whistled softly. They came brushing through the tangle to the doorstep, and looked at me with their beautiful, trusting eyes of love.

There was a man at the livery stable in town who would pay me good money for them, but I knew him for a cruel brute. Had I not seen him kick his own horse, and beat it over the head with the butt of his whip? My hand slipped within the bosom of my dress, and tightened on the pistol that I carried there. I could be that brave surely, and do for my horses what I wished somebody would do for me.

Andy neighed softly in a little sweet, tremulous fashion, and Dan tapped the doorstep daintily with his hoof. It was a trick I had taught them with apples and sugar, and as they shook their heads up and down in expectancy, despite their leanness and their rough, ungroomed coats, they seemed so full of the love of life that I dropped my hand and went slowly into the house to bring the last lumps of sugar in my dish.

I don't know why it was that just then I should think of Bran, the Englishman's dog, but in this moment of my extremity, when I was watching my dears munch their sugar, I recalled that setter's frisking trot at his master's heels, his silky, shiny coat, and his air of perfect well-being—the only thing in Polk County that did look prosperous; and along with the thought of the setter came the remembrance of a verse I had once been made to learn



When I was watching my dears munch their sugar, I recalled that setter's frisking trot at his master's heels.

after some capers of mine with a kitten: "The merciful man is kind to his beast."

It gave me an idea—a ray of hope! That Englishman was a merciful man if I might judge by the look of his one beast; perhaps there still was feed in his barn—at any rate he had a Bermuda pasture down on the edge of the lake. I'd go and see him. Blossom and the hens could fend for themselves if I died of loneliness and starvation, but I must make provision for those horses while yet I could.

He was a very lazy Englishman, so I had always heard—I did not know him, except merely to bow in passing—and in the prosperous days before the freeze he was much fonder of taking his ease than he was of looking after his grove. He did not make any des-

perate attempt at trucking, after that fatal fourteenth of February, not he; he only sold his mules and horses, and continued to take his ease on certain remittances that came from England. This was post-office gossip that I had gathered variously, and I did not approve of him, but his dog's looks spoke well for the way he would care for any beastie he might adopt.

I rolled the sleeves down over my arms, threw on a hat, and set forth on my two-mile walk. I could have driven Dan and Andy, but they were so lean, so rough-coated!

There he lay in a hammock under the trees on his unkempt lawn, his legs crossed, his heels much higher than his head, and a pipe in his mouth. His eyes were closed, and he did not know I was near until I said "Good after-

noon," the second time. He squirmed to his feet and came to the ground with a thump, his pipe quickly removed from his mouth.

"Oh, I beg pardon! How do you do, Miss Lingard?" he greeted me in confusion.

I sat me down on a bench near by, and looked about me. The same dreary scene that I had left was duplicated before me, and I forgot my quest for a moment, forgot to respond to his speech, as the hopelessness of it all shut fast down upon me. A soft head nestled against my knee and roused me, as the Llewellyn shoved his cool nose into my hand, and looked upward at me.

"You perfect darling! You *beautiful* creature!" I cried, with a half sob. My thought was all for the dog, the lovely, happy brute, but as I spoke my eyes were fastened on his master. He laughed lazily.

"Thanks!" he drawled. "The same to you!"

My dull wits came to a feeble spark at this, but they did not quicken sufficiently to make me blush or laugh with him at his clumsy joke. I only bent lower over the dog, so that my hat should hide my face.

"I have come to make you an offer," I blundered out, and realizing how very funny that sounded, I made haste to explain further. "My tomato crop was an entire failure; I have had bad news from the only money I had in bank; I shall not be able to keep my horses any longer, and if you will accept, I want to give them to you. I tried—to shoot them—this afternoon—but somehow I couldn't."

The words came hard. Oh, I loved Dan and Andy; and the Englishman knew I did, for many was the time in the prosperous days that he had met me winding in and out among the pines, guiding them by the lightest touch on the reins; and once on a wager I had driven them straight through the woods with the lines knotted on the dashboard, directing them clear of logs and trees with words alone—my beautiful, clever horses!

"Mr. Miles wants them," I proceeded, when I had swallowed sufficiently to speak, "but I could shoot them easier than see him own them."

There was no immediate answer, and, when I looked up, the Englishman was gazing absently out across the lake, stroking his pointed beard with the hand that did not hold the pipe.

"We'll have a cup of tea," said he, so abruptly that I jumped.

I sat still with the dog's head on my knee, and watched the man potter in and out with the things. There was a rusty caddy with a picture of elephants on its side, a spirit lamp, and a cracked pot, but the fragrant yellow tea was decanted into cups as fragile and white as a nautilus shell.

"It would be much better iced, in this weather," he remarked, as he handed it to me, "and I should like to offer wafers with it, but—" He waved airily toward the blackened trees. "You probably understand."

I did, and I drank my tea gratefully. It was the first I had tasted for many days.

"It has been an unconscionable time since I have had the pleasure of a lady's company at my five-o'clock tea," he observed affably, and there was a laugh lurking in the down-drooped corners of the eyes that dwelt upon my face.

I straightened into primness for a moment. "Your tea is quite nice," said I, "and I am glad to be reminded how tea tastes once more, but I did not come for social purposes."

"Oh, I beg pardon! The horses."

He grew thoughtful at once, and presently was gazing out across the lake again. The lazy, lazy man! The tea was fast reviving me, and I felt a wild impulse to throw something at a man who was too indolent even to hold up one end of a conversation. In another moment I should have said something impertinent, had not the setter rubbed her head up and down against my knee, and reminded me of Andy and Dan with their burr-matted manes and lean flanks. Their fate was not yet decided. I must be diplomatic.

"They are the most unusual horses," I urged gently upon his attention. "Swift in harness and very small feeders—oh, they eat *so* little," I argued most truthfully. "Then if you should need work horses you really would be astonished." He looked at me so superciliously that my heart sank. "But they *can* plow," I went on hastily. "When I was fixing the ground for my tomatoes, I used to let the plow handles slip out of my hands and bang them over the shins, and sometimes the point would catch on a root or something, and the most awful things would happen, yet all the time they were as patient as oxen, and as ready to try it all over again for me as though they weren't thoroughbreds—you knew of course that they were, didn't you?—Wilkes horses both of them out of Zuleika by Mambrino"—I was rattling off their pedigree parrot-like, when the Englishman came to life and faced me with an awful scowl.

"Of course it is no affair of mine," he exclaimed, "but do you mean to say that *you* plowed those ponies?"

"I didn't *mean* to say it," I replied, my face burning. "It was a shame to put them to the plow, but without money I couldn't hire mules, could I? The plowing was not a very good job, I will admit, but that wasn't the fault of Dan and Andy; and after we harrowed it, I fixed it with a hoe, and it didn't look so very badly. I only told you about it, so you would know they were worth more than as mere trotters."

He said something that I would have thought was "Damn!" if ever it had seemed possible that he could get up energy enough for anything so forcible, and then he looked at the lake some more. I was just preparing to represent to him that Dan and Andy would be safe and desirable companions for the setter, who no doubt was lonely sometimes, when he bristled around at me with a very business-like demeanor.

"About the horses now, Miss Lingard," said he. "The fact is, that it is quite a coincidence that you can spare them. I am greatly in need of just

such a pair as yours, and buying them, as you probably surmise, is out of the question just now. I want a pair that will trot, and look well in harness, and yet not be too high-minded for a gentleman to plow, when he feels so inclined. If you can let me have yours for a year—say—or even until spring, I shall be glad to hire them. As for your proposition, you probably were joking about giving them to me, and under the most propitious circumstances it is hard for me to understand any jokes except such as I manufacture myself. If you really meant to give them to me, I must say, that just now I cannot accept so great an obligation as the gift of a pair of Wilkes trotters."

He gravely poured me a second cup of tea. I observed that my spoon, though worn thin, was engraved with a crest, and as I did have a head for a joke, since the tea had revived me, I longed to retort, that in *my* present position I, too, should have scruples about accepting a pair of anything, unless they were to be eaten instead of fed.

"You are acquainted somewhat with my circumstances, I fancy," he proceeded, motioning with his cup toward that abomination of desolation that had once been a grove. "I cannot offer an adequate hire, but perhaps say—one hundred dollars—would answer, on condition that you should have the use of the horses for any purpose except that of plowing, at any time you might demand them."

"Oh, I can't make any such bogus bargain as that," I remonstrated, all his threadbareness, all his sponged and shrunken neatness fairly hurling itself into my face. "I just want to *give* them to you."

"And I can't take them without consideration." His voice sounded cold and stubborn, but there was something in his drooping eyes that suggested a twinkle. "For another thing, it would not look well for me to accept such a gift from a lady—it isn't quite the thing."

"But to keep them from starving—

or being shot! I tell you I don't want your money; I didn't come with that in view at all, and I won't have it."

He shook his head. "I will shoot them if you say so, but it would be a pity. I suppose I *can* rent mules—my own probably, from Miles—but I cannot hire a man now; and I have a certain foolish pride, and I never should recover my dignity again if I were to ride or drive so absurd a beast as a mule. I doubt if I could even get my own consent to plow one."

The tea must have been a witches' brew, for I had to bite my tongue to keep it from telling him that I doubted if he could get his own consent to plow—Pegasus. He was not to be shaken in his determination, and although I knew that a hundred dollars would be sheer charity, it would save my horses, and it was finally agreed that to save my feelings he should steal them away in the night some time very soon.

The sun was sinking low over the lake by the time our trade was concluded, and he and Bran walked to my grove gate with me. Now, that the horses were provided for, I took a truce from woe, and as we strolled we talked, and I discovered that the Englishman could be a charming sort of companion when he could muster the energy to try. Not one word was said about those frozen oranges, not a mention was made of my tomato crop that failed so ignominiously, nor of his that he was too indolent to plant. It was all of writers, and books, and illustrators, and music. It was like wine to be saying and answering such things as, "Have you read?" or "Didn't you think?" and "Do you remember how Eames took that note in—"

He lifted his hat at my gate and left me. I looked after him, flinging off down that sandy road, a curl of smoke in his wake. The lazy, loafing younger son! I felt a sort of a contempt for him. Why didn't he stir about and do something, or go away like all the others had done? And yet—he was going to take care of Dan and Andy; his tea and talk had made me feel like a woman once more instead of a cast-

off plaything of Providence, so I must suspend my judgment.

I went within, and because I *was* a woman once more, I looked at myself in the mirror. I looked and laughed, and almost cried again at what I saw there. It would have been a white face for all its tan, but for the tear smudges all over my nose and around my eyes—I had so far lost track of my femininity as to forget my mirror before I went to interview a man! My hair, under favorable conditions, was wavy, but now for the sake of coolness it was tightly plastered back and twisted into a knob like the veriest cracker woman wears it. Pshaw! I didn't care. If he *was* a man person, he was nothing more, and some way I felt better, and I sang a snatch from "Ernani," as I drew a reluctant pint from Blossom for my supper. So little it requires to make the solitary glad! It did occur to me to wonder where that man would get the hundred dollars—hoped to save it from his remittances probably, and pay it on the installment plan.

"Never mind, I won't look a gift horse in the mouth," said I to myself, and then while vainly trying to determine whether there was either joke or pun in such a conclusion, I fell asleep.

CHAPTER II.

When I awoke, the sun was streaming hot in my face. I felt dazed and sore, and it seemed I might have been asleep for a year—I had lost count of time, in some mysterious way. Another blistering day! I dragged myself to the window, and whistled, but there was no padded sound of slender hoofs on the sand, not a note of the low, sweet whinny I loved so well. My horses were gone, and under the front door was a note from the Englishman inclosing ten crisp ten-dollar bills, and expressing the hope that I would feel entirely free to make use of the pair whenever I cared to.

My head felt queer and achey, and I was still sitting there at the doorstep when a neighbor stopped at my gate—a thing that had not happened before

for months. He came lugging a great basket up the walk.

"It came in on the five-o'clock train, marked 'Perishable.'" He set the basket down with a thump, and mopped his face with his shirt sleeve. "The agent asked me to fetch it out; the express was prepaid." He concluded with an air of importance: "Bein' as I had to stop here, anyhow, I took and ast for your mail, too," and he handed me a letter.

That basket! Shall I ever outlive the pleasure of that moment? It had a strange look of long time ago about it, and I forgot the horses and my own great loneliness, as I pried eagerly into its miracle. Roses, white and palest yellow and pink, with fern leaves under fold after fold of white tissue paper that rustled deliciously beneath my trembling fingers. Ice—ice cunningly fixed in the heart of that basket, and around it, and yet where the drip could not touch them were grapes with their bloom of pearl over purple suggesting frost and coolness, peaches, and cherries that carried me back in a moment to a mountain village I had seen in Kentucky when I went there as a girl, where I had seen a great tree full of these very beauties overhanging the road. Tucked away up at one side among fold after fold of waxed paper, I found a great box of bonbons.

I kissed the roses, and hugged them close to my burning face—my tears dripped all over the blessed cool fruit, and I buried my nose in the adorable fluff of white ribbon on the candy box. I don't know how long I sat there, flat on the floor, before I remembered to open the letter; but when I did—well, I wonder why it is that people have such long barren stretches of ill fortune, without one little blessing to lighten the way, and then when good things do happen they come pouring down all at once.

The letter was from Dora Deane, a Southern woman whom I had known only rather slightly; but had instantly recognized as a kindred soul. She had lived all her life on a big orange grove on the edge of a seacoast town—a

grove that had gone the way of all the others in the freeze. At the conclusion of her letter, she wrote:

I have heard of your loss, and you know that mine is like unto it. Come, and if starve we must, let us starve in each other's good company.

It has come to me many times since then, that when Dora Deane wrote that sentence, she did it half idly, and that if she thought about it at all, she probably expected letters to pass. At the time, however, I was in no condition to consider amenities. My darling horses were gone, I was lonely with a desolation past imagining, and the fruit, the blossoms, and the foolish bonbons maddened me with a homesickness for old days and old ways that I could not bear; so before that day was done, I am told that a distraught creature, without bag or baggage, but with her arms full of wilted roses, and a box of melting candy, fell literally at Dora Deane's feet begging desperately to "Let's begin starving right now—only let it be *together*."

Long afterward I heard that I left my house in the queerest plight, an unmade bed, a basin full of water, and letters lying promiscuously about for any to read who cared to stray in through the unlocked doors, but the first clear impression that came to me after days of troubled dreaming was of Dora standing by my bedside with a bowl of soup at which I had instantly dissolved in tears, and howled weakly at her all the rebellious words I could muster.

"What is that? You hate broth and despise milk? You want and you intend to have beefsteak and pie? Now, I like that! You came here to starve to death, Alice Lingard; not to kill yourself with riotous living! One bite of beefsteak after thirty-five days of fever would finish you."

"Give it to me—oh, please!" I wailed. "Let me die with a full stomach—oh, do! I've tried starving, and it won't work."

"You open your mouth!"

There was a look of determination in those violet-blue eyes which had



"Oh, I beg pardon! How do you do, Miss Lingard?" he greeted me in confusion.

taught me their sweetness in that month of fire and fancy, and just back of it was one of tenderness divine that always followed compliance, so I opened my mouth, and after I had gulped down the hated broth, she sat down beside the bed and talked about fashions and new frocks, as though we both had only to pick and choose to our liking.

"Heigh-ho!" she yawned, as she rose. "It is hard to realize that fall is almost here."

"Is it?" I struggled on my pillow. "Is it time to plant lettuce?"

"Plant your grandmother! Now, you're wandering in your mind again. Who wants to plant lettuce? Now, you listen to me till I plant an idea in that queer head of yours. Don't you know that lettuce is a luxury, and that people will not buy luxuries when they are hard up? Now, photographs are necessities, and folks have to get most awfully poor before they stop

having 'their beauty struck'! Had you thought of that truth? No? Well, I have long and deeply, and those two years you spent at Cooper are coming in handy now; for you and I, just as soon as you can focus a camera, are going to open a studio right here in this town; in that little speck of a place on Water Street that I pay taxes on. You, Miss Lingard, are to furnish the work, and I, Dorothea Deane, will provide the wits. Now, if you please, you are going to shut your eyes and go straight to sleep. I'll tell you some more when you absorb your next soup."

It worked like a strong tonic, did that idea of Dora Deane's. It was exactly what I needed. Never, in the dreariest days, had I relinquished the hope of having a grove again, and it filled me with impatience to see other owners selling out for a song, or sitting down amid the ruins and going into demoralization as though a freeze must be ex-

pected every year. Oranges had paid, and they surely would again, and although I knew that it would require money and a good deal of it to get my grove started again, I fully intended to make it in some way or other and so apply it.

My experience with tomatoes had been so discouraging, and I was hearing of so many who intended trying lettuce and eggplant that I grasped at the idea of something different—something of steadier nature, and with little risk. Dora felt about the whole matter as I did, and we both hoped to realize something through rentals, until we could see our way further. In the swift days of my convalescence we talked of our scheme by the hour. Tourists would soon be coming in; for the tourist crop in Florida is not to be reckoned as one of the uncertainties. These would bring their cameras, as surely as they brought their clothes, and there would be their products to develop and print.

Then we would rig up a little tea room just off the studio, and make it a loafing place and reading room for any who chose to bide a wee there. Out at my place were treasures of other lands which had come to me through an ambassador uncle—trunks full of them, carefully salted down with moth balls. These we put into requisition along with some few fine pictures that the two of us could muster, and a few—just a very few—fine photographic studies to illustrate what we could do in that line.

Dora had inherited the housekeeping talents of a long line of Southern women, and her little cakes, her sandwiches, and such trifles had a flavor quite unique; this talent she would utilize, also the gift of "the growing hand" which had made the garden at her old home the admiration of the countryside. We congratulated each other at intervals that my one extravagance had run to cameras, and that she happened to own that little house up on the principal street.

Most of that hundred dollars was still left, the doctor was an admirer of

Dora's, and his bill was infinitesimal, she had done all the nursing, and so there it was for working capital. I dismissed my scruples about using it. The Englishman should have it back with interest if our venture proved a success, and in another year I might be able to keep my horses, and very glad I would be that his sense of humor had not risen to the point of accepting them as a gift. I did wonder, though, where he got that money, when I knew for a certainty that he was as hard hit as anybody.

It was Dora who made the trip to my desolate grove, and gathered such belongings as we required.

"Such a queer, queer creature as came over to the house, Alice, when some bird of the air conveyed to him the news of my presence there," said she on her return. "It had a red-brown Vandyke beard, and flannel trousers halfway up his shins, and a way of speaking that wasn't United States, nor yet high Dutch. I made out that he wished to convey through me his 'k-yind regy-ards to Miss Lingy-ard.'" Here Dora paused in her task of draping an *obi* across the corner of a screen, to wave an imaginary pipe in the air. "He was truly distressed to learn of her—er—indisposition—and perhaps it might interest her to know that the horses were in every particular fulfilling her recommendation of them."

"The Englishman! I wonder if he ever has picked the burrs out of my horses' manes and tails? I guess he hasn't, though, for he is a very lazy man, and it is an awful undertaking. I did it every day after I first turned them out to forage for themselves, but it got so hot, and every night there were just as many in as there were the night before—I guess they are all still sticking in, and maybe more—he is so lazy!"

I sighed and dismissed him from my thoughts, but my partner gave me a very peculiar look, though she said nothing. She had to make another trip down into Polk, and a while afterward she threw a finished print in

my lap. I gave a cry and bubbled over. It was Dan and Andy harnessed to a light buggy, and the light was so cunningly caught that I could fairly see the gleam on their glossy coats, while their manes, long and silky, seemed just ready to lift with the lightest breeze. A lanky man with a pipe in his mouth held the reins over them, but I had no eye for him.

"I hated to spoil the picture by that blot of a man person," apologized Dora, "but the light and the pose were so exactly right for the horses that I didn't dare risk waiting another moment to snap them."

"Oh, I can forgive him anything," I exclaimed joyfully. "I can even bear to see him in the picture—he has groomed my darlings!"

In the busy, busy days that followed, I looked often at the picture, as my first work was an enlargement of it. I had of course to look at the man, and as I saw the droop of his eyes it seemed queer to me that he had confessed to a lack of humor.

"There must be a good streak in him, despite his lack of enterprise, Dora," I hazarded. "His dog is a wonder of care, and my horses! 'The merciful man is kind to his beast,'" I concluded piously, "but it is a great pity that he won't brace up and be somebody."

"Perhaps he lacks incentive," suggested my partner. "Isn't he entirely alone? Has he any one at all to take a kindly interest in him?"

"I'm sure I don't know," I replied indifferently. "But if I were a six-foot man, I'd be ashamed to sit down in a ruined grove and vegetate—or starve. I'd do something."

"So might he, if some one whom he esteemed would encourage him a little bit. Frozen oranges are a mighty shock-in' experience, you know, Alice, and you might—"

"See here!" I faced around upon her rather fiercely, "I don't know what you are driving at, but if it is any foolishness about me and that man, you may as well dismiss it from your thoughts, and you'd better leave it out of your conversation. He doesn't esteem me

any more than I do him, and you and I are both too far along in years to be hatching out ideas like schoolgirls."

She seemed properly impressed, and subsided instantly, but that night in order to still a conscience which her remarks had rendered irritable, I wrote to Mr. J. Francis Blake a prim little note, expressing my gratitude for his beautiful care of my horses, and hoping that with the coming of fall time he had recovered from the stunning effects of the freeze, and was ready to take hold of life with redoubled energy. I started to write it "energy," but purposely scratched that out, and finished it "enthusiasm."

"Though that isn't saying much," I grumbled to myself as I sealed the letter. "Twice nothing is nothing, and he doesn't look as though he ever had any enthusiasm about anything."

Custom didn't come our way with any great speed, nor did the loafers, though our tea room was brave with curios from far countries, with rare china, and fair embroideries, and with Dora's dainty ferns and palms all about it.

"Just you wait," she would say, when I gave words to my discouragements. "Even a doctor or a lawyer has to wait along at first."

One crisp November morning he came—our first victim!

"I want a type," said he abruptly. "I want my type took. 'My great-grandson he has wrote for it, and he wants to throw it up!'"

"Throw it up?" I repeated stupidly.

"Yes—throw it up—make a crayon life size of it. He has had lessons, and he can throw up a picture a day. He gets as much as five dollars apiece for 'em, but he is going to make me a present of mine, so I want my type took right away."

He was the oldest thing I ever saw—a little wizened old, old man, and as he talked his mouth mumbled, and his head waggled. He felt about in his coat pocket with his blunted fingers, and found a round scrap of paper, on which *ninety-seven* was printed in big black letters. I didn't understand at

all, until he had pinned it on the lapel of his coat.

"Now!" said he. "Now!" Then only did I realize that one cannot get too old or too ugly to have a vanity to pet. My poor old man was so vain of his age that he pinned it on his coat, as though it were not written so deep that he that ran might read it in every lineament of his face. He waggled about so that I had to make several exposures, and then he grumbled at the one dollar deposit. I made haste to finish his types, and it was an undertaking, but twice a day regularly he came hobbling in.

"Ain't they done yit?" he would ask, though his umbrella dripped a fresh spot with each visit. "Whenever will you git 'em done? My great-grandson has wrote, and you've got my good money. He wants to—"

"Here—here they are," I was able to say at last.

His head shook so hard as he took them that I shut my eyes a moment to keep from growing dizzy. They must have looked ugly, even to their original, for not all of my art could smooth out those deep-plowed lines, nor lend lustre to those bleared eyes; but my first victim gave me my first lesson in the human nature which one may learn only in a photographic studio.

"They're a mess!" he exploded as he looked. "A reg'ler mess, and I won't take 'em off you. Here, you gimme back that dollar o' mine!"

I protested mildly and in vain, and then hurried away to look for Dora. If she was to provide the wits for this establishment it was high time for her to appear on the scene. When we came back he was studying the pictures, and his black frown had relaxed. The longer he looked at them the better he liked them.

"I'll take 'em," he said. "But they're mighty poor, and they ain't wuth no more'n that dollar, and that's all you'll git out of 'em."

"No, indeed, Mr. Roberts," said Dora gently but very firmly. "If you don't like the pictures of course we do not wish you to accept them, but that

dollar was to pay for the plates used, and for Miss Lingard's trouble. You get no pictures for that, unless you take the half dozen." She held out her hand for them.

"My great-grandson has wrote," he began. "He wants to—" But I fled, and left them to fight it out.

"It is a good thing you are here," said I, as she plumped two silver dollars into my lap. "This sordid side of this business is not for me. I'd have given the poor old fellow his types."

"Yes, and have done your starving in a studio instead of on a grove. That poor old fellow holds mortgages over half the houses in this town."

By and by other victims drifted in, and one day in November Dora called me from my work in the little garden back of the house.

"There is something in the studio for you," said she, with a grin.

Unsuspecting, I went within, and there stood that Englishman. I greeted him, with my eyebrows as nearly in a question mark as I could make them. He seemed so embarrassed that I could scarcely identify him with the calm, cool, and collected individual I had tried to give my horses to, and finally he intimated that he wished a photograph. He sat for it without any foolishness, paid for the sitting, and lounged out. He didn't mention the horses, and I felt a delicacy about asking, since he had not replied to my note of thanks. I mailed his pictures to him, but one plate that I had taken on the sly as he was drifting out of my door, I finished for my own private amusement, labeled it "Weary Willie," and tucked it away in a portfolio.

Acknowledging the receipt of his package of photographs, he inclosed a pair of smart blue ribbons. He wrote:

It may please you to know that the Polk Countians have so nearly redoubled their "*enthusiasm*," as to hold a county fair, with some discreet racing features on the side. Catching their spirit, I took the liberty of entering Dan and Andy, and would herewith enclose the rol-de-rols they had worn home.

I kissed the ribbons and fastened

them up over "Bred in old Kentucky—A Study."

"He must be perking up," quoth Dora, as she read his letter.

"Oh, one doesn't have to perk much in order to enter the Wilkes pair in a trotting race against Polk County hacks, and he probably went to bed afterward," said I scornfully, and Dora hummed absently "When Johnny Comes Home from the Fair."

CHAPTER III.

It is not all beer and skittles being a professional photographer, and I soon learned that it requires a strong sense of humor, and patience unlimited, to cope with the weakness and vanity which seem to beset all, fashionable or simple, wise or silly, who go to seek their counterfeit presentments. This is a name that we adopted from a poetic-looking gentleman with ambrosial curls; a traveling evangelist, who insisted that he must be taken in a characteristic attitude, one hand supporting his reflective cheek, the other disposed gracefully upon an open Bible in front of him.

"But I don't read with my book at my side," he objected to certain suggestions of mine. "I always have my reading stand out in front of me, and not too close, if you please. I should like the locket on my watch chain to show," he simpered. "It has certain—associations; and in a counterfeit presentment we desire naturalness above everything, you know."

I *had* thought that other victims desired flattery in their "counts," but just for meanness I let him have his way. The locket showed; so did the Bible, looming large in front of him, and that hand on its open pages looked more like a ham and sausages than anything else. He had posed himself, and made me waste a plate, but the fun of it repaid me; and, the next time, his reading stand stood at his left, and his countenance wore a meek and chastened look, which was most becoming.

Dora lectured me soundly about my lack of tact and the wasted plate, and

I promised not to do the like again, but this sort of a thing came to be a besetment with me where men were concerned. The vanity of young mothers and young girls is natural, but when that trait showed up in a mere man, it roused my ire to the kindling point, and I grew reckless. After all the things that have been said and written, what right has any man person to either curiosity or vanity—perquisites so essentially feminine? Dreadful as that Englishman was in some ways, he could mind his own business; and, as for vanity, he actually seemed embarrassed to death when he came for his sitting.

"I am glad you find something redeeming about that man," said my partner, when I had thus delivered myself. "I wonder why he came all the way to Deepwater for to get his beauty struck, when there are so many photographers nearer Polk County?"

"I'm sure I don't know," I retorted tartly. "Though a woman, I have rather a talent for minding my own business, and I didn't ask him."

Dora's mental attitude toward my acquaintance with the Englishman was very trying. I had no interest in him, nor he in me, beyond the mere fact of his keeping my Wilkes pair; nevertheless, when I wrote him my belated appreciation of the blue ribbons, I ventured to intimate to J. Francis Blake that the freeze would probably prove a blessing in disguise, when people got to where they could see through it, and that hitherto undeveloped resources of man and land would probably be brought forward promptly now, if either man or land was worth anything at all. There was land in Florida, as I well knew, that was too poor to sprout peas, and I suspected there were men as impossible. For my part, if the freeze had left me flat, I should just keep trying until I should regain foothold, and no speculator should have my grove for a trifle. I should reset it as soon as I could, and if anybody *wished* to do a thing, there always was a way. And with this virtuous conclusion to a letter which had been written partly as a result of my

irritation with Dora, I dismissed the matter from my mind.

Very soon after this I was alone in the studio one morning. A cracker woman came in, with three children in her wake—or, rather, two, for one was an infant in her arms, that she called "the baby," one tugging at her skirts that was the "knee baby," and Ardilla, a white-faced, woe-begone-looking young person of five. I suppose a shipment of beans or something must have turned out well, for she wanted "counts" of all her posterity. The baby was to be taken naked, and sitting in a wash-bowl, according to a soap ad. that she brought along with her. I think I must have gotten up on the wrong side of the bed that morning, and it always made me cross to have victims trying to dictate poses, regardless as to whether they were adapted to their style of beauty or not. I studied the ad. carefully, arranged the washbowl on a gray fur rug, and then asked innocently if I should give the infant a cake of soap.

"Oh, I'm afraid he'd chew it up," said his mother. "Don't you reckon he would? It would be cute, though."

The sweet, anxious mother look on that plain little face made me ashamed. "I guess he might do something like that," I replied.

And then, since in the washbowl it had to be, I bent my whole energies to making a pretty picture of it, and did not even get impatient when the mother, with frantic cooings and clappings, to win a smile from him, got him into such a wax that he slipped in the bowl, reversing ends with a bumped head, and then had to be comforted and quieted after the world-old fashion of babies before I could proceed with my work. The knee baby was left to my unabated judgment, but Ardilla was to be the crowning glory of the family. Ardilla was to be taken exactly like a picture of Ardilla's Cousin Nettie, with flowers in her hands and wreaths in her lap; a picture which had recently come from 'way up in the mountains of North Carolina.

"All right, Ardilla!" I called out

cheerfully to that young lady whom we had left in the tea room, but Ardilla did not respond. She was not to be found in the skyroom, and when I sought for her where tea was wont to be dispensed she was not there—but the Englishman was!

"How do you do?" I greeted him coolly. "Have you seen a little girl since you came in?"

He had not, although he confessed to having been there for a full quarter of an hour. With visible embarrassment, he resumed his seat to await my leisure, and the magazine he took up to pass the time away was "The Dinner Table," a periodical devoted only to receipts culinary. I hoped he would find it edifying and instructive, and then went with Ardilla's distracted mother to scour the streets of Deep-water.

When we returned from our fruitless search, the Englishman stood in the studio door, "The Dinner Table" still open in his hand. With a weary smile, he pointed to a little hand protruding from beneath the King of Siam's sister's petticoat, which gaudy, but simply constructed, garment we were using as a table cover. Ardilla lay there on the floor, fast asleep. Our noise awoke her, and as she sat up, half dazed, I told her ingratiatingly that I was ready now to make a pretty picture of her, like Cousin Nettie's. All at once she began to scream so that even the Englishman was startled.

"I don't want my legs cut off," she wailed. "I just won't have my legs cut off, like my Cousin Nettie's—I don't want any picture—I won't—" And a good deal more of the same.

The mother looked at her in fright, and Dora, who had lately come in, suggested the doctor; but I understood in a flash. The poor, little, frightened child! That picture of Nettie showed only a few inches of leg below the knee; and how else could Nettie get her picture with just pieces of legs, if whole ones were there? As I cuddled and soothed the little thing into confidence, I reflected that such chopped-off children were not only inartistic, they



He had bent so suddenly and raised my hand to his lips.

were positively unmoral, and they might be largely accountable for the fear and dread which made most small victims quail so abjectly before the camera.

Poor Ardilla! The stiff-starched bravery of her white dress was sadly marred, and she and her mother held a long secret session in the dressing room with curling irons and a lighted lamp while I held the wee baby and amused the knee baby, ignoring my two companions, who seemed quite capable of entertaining each other; but at last she was made ready. I succeeded in getting a sweet picture of her, in which the eyes looked happy and unafraid, and the two spare legs showed complete and fair.

"Mr. Blake is quite submerged in admiration of your patience," said Dora, with an air of turning him over to me, as my woman and her babies took their leave. It was exactly the wrong thing for her to have said, and

a senseless irritation immediately took possession of me.

"You seem to have a good deal of patience your own self," said I to him, rather ungraciously, "but I have heard of such a thing as patience ceasing to be a virtue."

He regarded me soberly. "I fancy you are making one of your jokes," said he. "But I have a very poor head for jokes, as you know. I would like to get some pictures."

"How many, please?" I asked briskly. "And will you have the profile or the full face? I think the latter are better."

He had the grace to appear greatly abashed. "I think I prefer a new sitting," he said modestly.

It was on the tip of my tongue to protest, to ask if the others were unsatisfactory, but to have done so would have been poor business policy, and it was none of my affair any way, so I proceeded to make an entirely new set.

"I never did think very much of that man," I confided to Dora in disgust, "but I would not have accused him of vanity, especially where there is so little cause."

"He is a shrewd fellow," said my partner positively.

"Well, he isn't! He is a goose! There is no shrewdness in having two sets of pictures made within two months—expensive ones, at that, when I guess he is as hard up as anybody in Florida."

"But don't you remember that I told you photographs were necessities? They are—sometimes." Her enigmatic smile made me furious. "There are three ways in which they might be so regarded by the Englishman; he may make them an excuse for coming to a place he very much desires to visit, he may see in them a way to assist two poor, though deserving, females——"

"Oh, I wish you *would* not talk so!" I stormed at her, but she went on:

"The third hypothesis I regard as the one most likely to be true, and that is, that the girl in England didn't just fancy the first lot you made."

I never had heard of any especial girl in England, and I didn't believe that she had, although she had held very much more of converse with J. Francis Blake than I had; but the thought kept coming to me, and I wondered what sort of a girl it would take to be in love with that lanky specimen, and if her affection would stand the strain of seeing him in the ridiculous clothes he wore.

The thought of a possible girl made a great difference in my feeling toward the Englishman, and kindled my smouldering disapproval into something like animosity. I could not get him off my mind, and all the while I was retouching his "counts," I was dying to tell him just what I thought of him.

I really was glad when a letter came from him that demanded an answer. He said that he had been asked to ascertain if my place could be rented. I pondered over the matter, and finally decided that I would let it, on condi-

tion that my trees were to be rebudded at once, and nothing planted in between that could injure their growth, as I was most anxious to begin my grove again. True, I wrote, I had not the incentive of any near of kin, nor of a loved one who was awaiting my success and expecting the best of me, but above all things, I would like to keep good friends with myself, and I certainly would not be able to respect any individual who could sit tamely down under misfortune and go to sleep.

He did not reply to this dreadful letter, but came almost immediately, with a look of determination on his face. I thought—hoped—that he had come to quarrel, but it seemed that he had only nerved himself up to getting some rent papers signed up, whereby my grove was leased for two years to one James Marbury. And when that transaction was concluded, in a perfectly matter-of-fact way he asked to have his pictures taken. I began to think he was crazy, after I had investigated the corners of his eyes and failed to find a glimmer there, but I prepared my camera and photographed him in a grim silence.

"And how about your own grove?" I asked as he was leaving in the slow and gradual manner peculiar to him. "Aren't you going to rebud it?"

"No," he began, "I——"

I interrupted impertinently: "You'd rather say the climate is changing and just give up?"

"The climate has not changed in one important respect," he rejoined patiently. "It takes all the energy out of a man just as completely as it did before that beastly freeze made energy something of a necessity. Your activity amazes me."

"It isn't half as bad as it looks," said I pertly. "Why don't you try it?"

He looked at me for a moment in silence, and then: "Perhaps I shall," said he, "when I finish making up my mind. Just now my thoughts are mainly occupied with the woman I expect to marry. She has energy and initiative enough for half a dozen, and I am trying to determine whether I hadn't better leave all that sort of thing to

her. I want her to love and admire me, and such feelings usually go out to opposites. When did you say you could mail the pictures to me?" he concluded abruptly.

"A week from to-day, if the sun is good," I replied, my head in a whirl, and too stunned to think of a saucy rejoinder.

What on earth had he meant by that speech and by his strange behavior in taking leave? I asked myself this over and over again. There might be a girl in England, after all; there certainly was no one left in the desolation of Polk County. But why had he looked at me in such a funny, funny way, and why, oh why, when he raised that fore-and-aft cap in taking leave, had he bent so suddenly, raised my hand to his lips, and—I felt the brush of that red-brown beard on my fingers for hours afterward. But because Dora was so given to spells of frivolous-mindedness, I did not see fit to mention either speech or action to her. Afterward I was very glad that I had not, and yet I almost wished that I had, as a matter of protection to her, my own best friend.

When an order came from a promoting company for a set of Polk County photographs I willingly accepted it. There had been a long stretch of uninteresting sitters—those awful four generation pictures of two grandmothers, a mother and a baby—brides and grooms, a weary waste of them, only enlivened by that pair, who, when I retired beneath the dark cloth to get the proper focus, regarded themselves as so secure from observation that they kissed with a fervor which would have made me blush, if it had not set me to laughing so that I thought I never could straighten my face sufficiently to emerge. There were individuals—always men—who feared that their ugliness might shatter my camera, and there were others—always women—who did not take a good picture, and dreaded a visit of this kind more than a season in the dentist's chair, and only came because their husbands begged them to.

If we did not get rich that first winter, at least we did not starve, and we

learned a great deal that we had not previously known about human nature; but it grew a little monotonous, despite the success of the tea room, which almost assumed the character of a salon, as the weeks went by.

"Of course, we'll get the views, and charge them a good round price," said Dora. "You'd better run over the first good day. I know the Britisher would place the horses, and maybe his delightful self, at your disposal."

That remark did the work, and after it, I declined utterly to go down into Polk, insisting that for that sort of a thing she could handle a camera quite as well as I could. The excuse I gave her was that I really could not bear the thought of seeing my desolate place again until I was ready to begin rehabilitating it, and that it would be impossible to get the best lake views without passing it. The truth was that I dreaded to see the Englishman. Very reluctantly my partner yielded to me, and set forth with a box of plates and a five-by-eight view camera.

"I think you are very silly," she said in farewell. "If I hated to see a place—or a person—I'd make myself go and look, until I had whipped out such a mock sensibility."

"If you see Dan and Andy, I wish you'd please kiss them for me," said I, disregarding her disapproval.

"Not I! I'd rather kiss the Englishman, and if you want any such caresses applied to your Wilkes pair, you can bestow them yourself."

She came home transformed—another creature. J. Francis Blake was forever on her lips, and the slightest excuse was sufficient to start her off with "Mr. Blake says," or "Mr. Blake thinks." It seemed that he had driven her all about behind my horses, in order for her to get the very best views with which to beguile Northern purchasers out of their money in exchange for Polk County investments; indeed, he seemed to be the foremost promoter of that scheme. Some people who would not work would scheme, and even laziness might come to appear preferable to such beguiling, was my thought.

I knew well enough that he had it in him to be very interesting. I never could forget that mad last afternoon of mine, when he had eased up the weight of woe for me with his bright chat of books and music and the men and women who made them. She was a level-headed woman of the world, was Dora, with plenty of men to admire her, but her talk frightened me.

"Dora," I interrupted her, "did you go to see the Englishman's place?"

"Surely! I drank tea on his lawn yesterday out of Spode cups, and made friends with his dog."

"Well, didn't you think his place expressed him exactly? Unkempt, shabby, weedy, and all that? He is a very lazy man for a woman like you to be raving over."

Dora eyed me silently for a space. It was a horrid thing for me to have said, but she ignored it.

"Yes," she said thoughtfully. "His place does express him—exactly; but the thought had not occurred to me before."

The plates she brought home developed well, but on the day I was to print them, I found them most unaccountably shattered to bits. Now, such a thing is a trick of photographers when for some reason a second sitting is to be desired, but I certainly had nothing to do with this accident. It left the situation most difficult. Whether as a result of my rude speech or not, Dora had been treating me coolly since I made it, though she still quoted the Englishman on all occasions. To send her back for duplicates would be risky, if not actually unkind. Had he not spoken definitely to me of some woman he was going to marry? Had he not kissed my hand—mine, when I was less than nothing to him? And had not his eyes dwelt upon my face in a way that brought the scarlet into it? If these were little mannerisms of his, Dora was in no state of mind to encounter them. She might take them too seriously; and yet I could not quite bring myself to mention that woman he was going to marry as a sort of warning to her.

She decided the matter herself. "We accepted the commission unconditionally, Alice," she said, when at last I told her of the broken plates. "I cannot go again just now, because my little celery plants are at the stage where a little neglect would ruin them, or a little too much kindness would cut them off in a day. You'll just have to pocket your emotions and get the pictures yourself."

She demurred strongly when I said that if go I must, I'd go that very night and have it over with, but I overruled her.

There was nothing in the look of Polk County that early lovely morning when I saw it again, to remind me of the burning desolation of that day when I had left it under the glare of the August sun. The trees were dripping with heavy dew, and hung daintily with the diamond-spangled curtains of great spider webs, while the birds sang over their nestlings, or swung on the topmost twigs. Wild azalea and hibiscus made splashes of pink and crimson against the tender green of the undergrowth, and the giant magnolias held aloft by thousands their brimming ivory and golden bowls of fragrance.

I had declined a driver, and hired from my old acquaintance, Bill Miles, a rig, which I drove here and there through the woods for views that I remembered, dreaming, as I drove, of the time when I should be able to reestablish my orchard and live there again during that part of the year when Florida is the fairest spot in America. I never would get rich on "counts," but they would tide me along maybe, until my grove would come into its own again.

Late in the afternoon, I turned stationward. Something pulled me toward home, and the Englishman's place that I had fought shy of all day. I wanted to see what my horses would do, once they heard me whistle again. I even felt a hankering toward Bran, and I could taste again the tea from that cracked pot. If only I could have these delights without seeing the Englishman.

I came to the crossroads; one led to the station, and the other toward the lake shore, where lay his property and mine. I pulled first one rein and then the other, until the patient brute between the shafts craned her head and looked around at me in wonder. While I sat there, still hesitating, and seesawing at the bits, I heard the sound of wheels on the sandy road behind me, and I quickly headed toward the station, before I turned and looked backward at what my heart had already told me I should see.

In another moment, I was out in the sandy road, a horse's head over each shoulder, and against my tear-wet cheek two shining satiny necks. If Dora was too fine to kiss a horse, I was not—bless them!

The Englishman had sprung to the ground at once, and when I had eyes to spare from Dan and Andy, he was politely scanning an advertisement on the signboard, his back squarely toward me. His delicacy made me feel very tender toward him. I forgot the probable woman—forgot Dora's infatuation. "Ahem!" I coughed in a lady-like manner. It was banal, but I did not know how else to apprise him that I had gotten the better of my emotions. He turned quickly, with outstretched hands, and as he came toward me, his drooping eyes bright with pleasure, I remember that it occurred to me that whatever else those eyes did, they never would cringe—nor beseech. Queer thought, for such a time!

"Mr. Blake!" I quavered. "I don't know what to say to you. I never saw anything so beautiful, so happy looking." I was looking straight into his eyes, my hand still in his.

"You read me well on the last count, my dear Miss Lingy-ard," said he with a little bow, and something springing into the corners of his eyes, "but I had never thought of myself as beautiful."

I snatched away my hand in a fury, flushing crimson. "That is twice you have cracked that joke. Haven't you gotten up energy to manufacture another? The other time I was too nearly dead to resent it, but now—I wish

you a very good afternoon!" I moved back toward the buggy that held my traps. He followed me, penitent and protesting.

"And you were even going back without seeing your horses—or your place!"

"I certainly was!" I disregarded his outstretched hand, and climbed unassisted into my place, and gathered up the reins. "I have ideas of my own about rented property. At the expiration of the lease, its condition will determine future holding, but I have no mind to exasperate the life out of people, snooping around and spying on them in the meantime."

"It wouldn't exasperate me; I consider it your duty," said the Englishman, leaning his arm deliberately on my wheel. "I hope you left Miss Deane well."

"I did—very well, and very busy."

"How you seem to commend busy people! I admire Miss Deane very greatly."

"So do many others," I made haste to say. "She has always had lots of admirers."

"Will you present my regy-ards to her?" he asked meekly, as I bade him another insistent good afternoon, and flourished my whip over Bill Miles' steed.

"I don't know whether I will or not!" I called back at him.

I drove onward to the station, feeling in some unaccountable way smaller and lonelier than I ever had in all my life before. It was quite true that Dora had admirers—a doctor and a lawyer were always underfoot, and there was a dignified circuit judge who had loved her for years; and of her and him, the irreverent youngsters of Deepwater were accustomed to say that they were only waiting to get old enough before they were to be married. Some one of them would eventually persuade her. Splendid Madonna-faced woman, with her violet-blue eyes, her sweetness and her fun, she was made to be the mother of men, not to wither alone, fighting the sordid fight of life—as I was doomed to spend my



In another moment I was out in the sandy road, a horse's head over each shoulder, and against my tear-wet cheeks two shining, satiny necks.

life. But no lazy, loafing Englishman should have her! On that point I was quite decided, and I also decided that I was willing to sacrifice dignity—her friendship, if need be—anything—all—to prevent her falling still further in love with him.

While I was still weighing the merits of doctor and judge, and trying to recount the shortcomings of J. Francis Blake, I arrived at the station. It was later than I thought, and as old Bill Miles came himself to relieve me of the rig, I asked anxiously about my train.

"Oh, you've got time a-plenty," said he, consulting his watch. "A good half hour."

My eyes rested accidentally on that watch; it was a large, old-fashioned one of gold, and on its case was, of all things—a crest! Queer possession for an old cracker like Bill Miles, unless

he had stolen or bought it. Where had I seen that crest before?

CHAPTER IV.

I kept puzzling over this question until the train arrived, and just as I was seating myself, it came to me. I had seen that identical crest on the Englishman's teaspoon that day when I drank the tea from his cracked pot, in the Spode cups. A moment later, Mr. Miles took the seat just in front of me. I disliked the man exceedingly, but I smiled at him in a friendly manner. He was communicative enough about most matters, and I felt some curiosity about his adorning himself with a crest similar to that of J. Francis Blake.

"Are we getting off on time?" I inquired guilefully. "Oh, what a handsome watch!"

"'Tis a pretty nice biscuit." He dis-

engaged it from his buttonhole and passed it over to me for inspection.

"It must have been in your family a long time," I traced the outlines of a mailed hand, with the tips of my finger, as I spoke.

"It has been in my family exactly nine months lacking twenty-seven days," he chuckled. "But that ain't saying that it won't be in my family for a long time to come. I tell you, Miss Lingard, it's a mighty hard freeze that doesn't warm somebody's pockets. My talent never did run to oranges, and now, I'm a sight better off than some that used to lord it over me. Not that I'd rub it in, though," he broke off politely, seeming to remember that I was one of the hard hit.

He made haste to specialize.

"That Englishman Blake now—that fellow you're paying to take care of them animals I would pay you good money for." This was news to me, but I did not blink, and examined all the more closely the exquisite chasing of leaves and flowers on the case of the watch. "He always was a curi's kind of a cuss," proceeded Mr. Miles, "lazy and biggetty, and all that, and this here is his watch—as *yit*!" He winked at me in an awful fashion. "I'm just a-wearin' it for him as a token of friendship, as you might say, or as a kind of an—uncle!"

"Yes?" I felt as though I had un-awares slipped up on somebody in moral *déshabille*; and longing to hear more, I still was too decent to ask for it.

"Here's something else I'm keeping for him the same way."

The man handed me a small locket, which he unwrapped from the bit of white tissue paper which enclosed its leather case. The locket was perfectly plain on the outside, but when its spring yielded to his touch, it revealed a sudden flash of gems, small, but perfect diamonds and sapphires closely set around the loveliest miniature I ever saw—that of a young woman with sweet blue eyes, and high-piled auburn hair.

"Wuth a good five hunderd any

day," commented Mr. Miles, "and the very idea of hidin' them shiners *inside* the case!"

Opposite the beautiful face was a simple inscription: "Millicent to Francis." I snapped it quickly shut, and handed it back. It made me sick—the whole sorry business I had stumbled upon; but because I would disillusion Dora, I listened while the conceited common man told how six months before he had happened to go up to Jacksonville on the same train with Blake, and had followed him into a pawnshop down on Bridge Street.

"That green he was, too! He wanted to make a raise on these two things for six months instead of thirty days. What'd that sheeny know about harf years and remittances, I'd like to know—or care, except to get the things for little or nothing! 'Oh, come off,' ses I to Blake, 'I've got money, and I'll make you a six months' loan.' And so I did. He was to have taken 'em up, but at the end of the six months he couldn't do it, and I agreed to let him have three months more, and then if he can't come across, I'm to have 'em for keeps, but he put me under promise not to wear the locket until it was mine. It'll make a dandy charm for my watch!" He dangled it before my eyes a moment, yawned slightly, and settled back for a moment in his seat, before, with sudden enthusiasm, he began again. "'The fool and his money is soon parted,'" he quoted, with unction. "I wisht you could a' seen the way Blake blowed it in, that night in Jacksonville! I stuck right to him like a duck to a June bug, and seen it all."

I wriggled uneasily. I did not know what sort of deviltry the Englishman might have gotten into, and I doubted Mr. Miles' sense of propriety as to what he might feel inclined to tell, but before I could get away he was going on.

"He had as good a supper as any man might need want, at a dago eatin' house, but he up and bought fruit by the basket, and candy, and of all things he turned over one five spot to a man for roses out'en an ice box, and then

such a time as he made over getting the layout packed just to his notion in a basket. When he bought the fruit I thought maybe he was getting it for himself, but when I seen the flowers and the candy, I knew better.

"'Blake,' ses I, confidential like, 'is this gal in the locket your jularky? Because if she is, she'd hate mighty bad to know you'd pawned her picture to buy foolishness for her—or, still worse, for anybody else!' I felt it my plain duty to speak, but I wisht you could 'a' seen the look he gave me. 'Mister Miles,' ses he, as lofty as a lord, 'a gentleman may get into a tight place, and sell, or even pawn, his most valued belongings, but his private affairs he only gives away—and that to his friends—or to other gentlemen!'"

I longed to cry, Bravo—Bravo! In passing the time of day with Mr. Miles I had acquired more information than I expected, so I rose abruptly to join an acquaintance on the other side of the car.

"He said a lot of other things that I disremember now," were the words that followed me down the aisle, "but I'll be able to rickollect 'em in about twenty-seven days, for I'm about dead certain' he hain't—" Then a few words I did not catch, and "I'll hold him to the day, sure as he's an Englishman."

I was tempted to go back and hear the rest of it, but it dawned upon me with something like violence that I was neither a friend of Mr. Blake's nor a gentleman, and that I was acquiring a larger knowledge of his private affairs—mixed up as they seemed to be with mine—than was either good or desirable. So I compelled myself to chat casually with this other acquaintance, though my cheeks were fairly burning up.

Why had I never associated him with that basket of fruit? It seemed almost to have dropped from the heavens, so grateful was it, such an oasis, and it was undoubtedly prompted by a great spirit of kindness; but kindness could not excuse the disloyalty to the beautiful girl in the locket—there *was* a girl

in England, after all—and kindness and impulse would not keep the pot boiling for my dear Dora, if he should finally inveigle her into marrying him, as I had no doubt was his intention; his indolence offset a multitude of virtues.

Finally I asked myself repeatedly, what sort of a husband would a man be, who could be so worked upon by a stranger's momentary distress, that he would do such a thing as that Englishman had done? I tried to leave myself and my horses entirely out of the question and consider it dispassionately as it applied to Dora. "Lacking twenty-seven days," Mr. Miles had said. That would make the loan due on the twenty-second day of next month. I did not know how I should manage it, but I was quite determined that neither locket nor watch should remain in Miles' family beyond that date. I would see to that.

Within a day or two after this, J. Francis Blake came to the studio again. He was not more chastened in his manner than I in my mind, burdened as it was with all I had learned of his affairs, but when he mildly requested another sitting I blazed out at him.

"Take your picture *again*? No! I certainly will not. Now, let us settle this question right now, Mr. Blake. If you are acting in this way just for an excuse to come to the studio, it is entirely unnecessary; just come right along whenever you get ready. You are not the only man who wants to be hanging around. If you are doing it in the way of financial assistance, it is quite foolish of you. I am in quite a prosperous way, thank you. I have been at work, and will soon have money to give away my own self. If it is pure vanity that makes you want a new picture of yourself every thirty days, why, just look at yourself in the glass, for I shall not take another picture of you—ever!"

I stood straight before him, my hands behind my back, my chin in the air.

"You have hit upon my reason," said he calmly. "It was only by way of excuse to come here."

"Very well, just come whenever you

feel so inclined. If Miss Deane can stand it, I suppose I can."

He ignored my awful rudeness, and after a moment's silence, he took a letter from his pocket. "Would you mind reading—just here?" said he. "This must be attended to, before we leave the picture subject entirely, and I feel incompetent to judge, or to quite explain to you."

The writing was fine and delicate, the paper was of foreign make, and these were the words I read:

I want a picture of you, Frank, dear; something later than any of these I have—one that will give me a glimpse of my old play-fellow just as he is in far-off Florida. The time seems long, and if you cannot come to me this year, I am going out to be with you, but in the meantime let me get acquainted with you again as you are now.

That was all I read, but the simple, tender words were as spoken to me by those curvy red lips of the woman in the locket.

"I do not like to judge which of my many likenesses is the best," said he, folding the letter, and stowing it carelessly in my pocket. "Will you select among them as early as convenient and mail the result to The Honorable Millcent Pentland, Red Gables Grange, Sussex, England?"

I wrote the address down, and directing him to where he could find Dora in the garden, I retired to the privacy of my dark room, and for some unaccountable reason, instead of doing my work, I sat down and cried. It truly was a responsibility to be playing dragon to a woman older and wiser than I was, and now this girl in England had cast herself on my mercy, too, and I felt a wild desire to protect her from the misery of a life with her old play-fellow as he now was.

My feelings were not soothed when I went out in the garden to drink tea with them, and found Dora with one hand stroking his arm; a performance which ended by his kissing her hand. I coughed with great asperity, and did not pretend not to have seen them. He looked embarrassed, but Dora only laughed shamelessly.

"I didn't know things had gotten so far along," I observed, sitting down across the little table from them.

"I intended telling you to-night, just what I have been telling him," said Dora. "But maybe I'd as well do it now. The judge and I have decided that at last we are old enough, so—" She laughed again, but her eyes as they rested upon mine were loving and sweet. "Until last year, there were his mother and mine, Alice; but now there is only you; and you are to be a member of our family, and only come to the studio in the daytime."

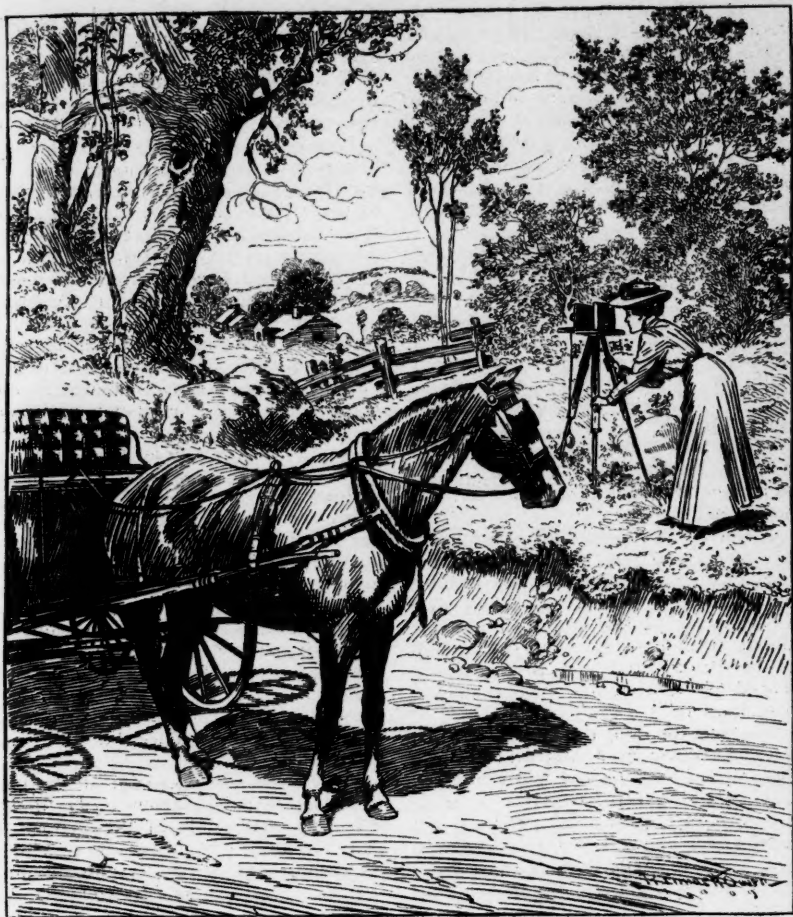
A great load slipped from me.

"She has the greatest way of deciding my affairs for me," said I to the Englishman, my relief being so broad that it included almost a feeling of friendliness for him at that moment, and a sort of pity for him in the disappointment I was sure he was feeling, though I had to admit that he carried it off well.

What rejoinder he made I cannot remember, but that was a happy evening that followed, there in the garden under the low mimosas. The judge came in presently, and we all chatted inconsequentially. The Englishman was at his best—and that was very good, if only one could forget certain other things about him, and not once did I cut him up short.

The next day I took out all his pictures, and tried conscientiously to decide among them. In the process I made a discovery. Whether it was from my own policy of trying to turn out "counts" as good-looking as the subject could be made, or for some other reason, I could trace a great change in the countenance of J. Francis Blake, since the first picture I had retouched of him—that enlarged likeness that included him in the picture of my horses. It was not a difference in the set of his head or the poise of his shoulders; the eyes drooped as persistently at the corners, and the red-brown beard had its same trim cut, but there was altogether a new expression, though I could not define it.

I called Dora, and asked her about



I drove here and there through the woods for views.

it. She studied the photographs spread in a row before me thoughtfully.

"It certainly is there," said she, "though I had not observed it in the man. Perhaps he *has* changed," she suggested, with a searching look at me.

"I don't think so," I said. "I guess I must have made it in retouching."

"What did you think about his place expressing him this time, dear?" asked Dora gently.

"I didn't see it—though I know it does—he hasn't changed," I replied stubbornly. It was the first time she had mentioned to me my trip down into Polk. "I think I might have gone by, but we met at the crossroads, and he made one of his abominable jokes, and I got so angry——"

"Alice," said my friend, "for a sensible woman, you act very queerly. You misjudge Mr. Blake."

"Will you kindly get out of my studio? Your garden needs attention, and you'd better be thinking about the judge than talking about another man. Don't mention his name to me again, if you value our friendship."

"I shall certainly ease my mind——"

"Ease it!" My fingers went into my ears. "I do not have to listen, but I do wish you would go on, and let me finish my work."

She looked down at me in exasperation, and said something, which, of course, I did not hear, as my ears were stopped, and then shaking her head she went out of the room.

That girl in England—that lovely Millicent. She looked Millicent or Blanche or Gwendolen and The Honorable, every inch of her. And to think that she was pinning her faith to that lazy Englishman, and begging for his picture, and coming out to him! It was dreadful!

I shoved the prints all away from me, and going over to the shelves, I ran my finger down the indexed plates till I came to number ten. It was that of him which I had stolen; it was the Weary Willie. That represented him as he really was, and that one she should have, though small thanks I would get if ever he found it out.

I locked the door the next day when I was finishing it up, and not until the picture was duly packed and ready for mailing did I run any risk of being caught in my little trick. I did not feel comfortable about it. If it had been to save Dora, it would have been all right, I had made my mind up to anything for her; but to be interfering in the case with a stranger, even if she was as lovely as a dream, that was a different matter. But I mailed the picture that very afternoon.

Sleeping over my act did not show it up, in a lovelier light, and the next day, I printed two of the last I had taken of him, one of his profile, and another that showed his high-arched brows, his pointed beard, and his drooping eyes in all their indolence, and writing a very short and business-like note to The Honorable Millicent, I sent

these to her. I merely explained that through some mistake my assistant had sent her a print from the wrong negative, and that I hoped she would like the photographs of Mr. Blake which he had ordered sent her.

I mailed this package and felt some better, but always was hanging over me the thought of the twenty-seventh of the month. I would not have cared two straws about his forfeiting his things, if only he had not borrowed on them for me. One hundred and twenty-five dollars just about represented my balance in bank, and how to make sure that he would get it, or that he would so apply it if he could be made to take it, wore constantly on me.

CHAPTER V.

"What in the world is the matter with you?" asked Dora of me one night as we went to our room. "If it hadn't been that the judge is so old an acquaintance, I should have been mortified to death with your conversation this evening, all about pawnbrokers, and pawn tickets, and whether 'just plain somebody that lent money on personal security' would probably issue a ticket at all. I really was afraid you were going to ask him for a loan, and now that you didn't, I suppose he went away with the idea that you and I were going to pawn something in order to buy my trousseau. This pawning business is something I haven't one bit of patience with. But are you thinking of making a raise on your cameras?"

"Not at all," I replied meekly. "I just happened to think about it, and I like to be informed about such things. After you take yourself and your wits out of the studio, I might need to borrow; for I shall not probably be so prosperous as I am with you here as my guide, philosopher, and friend."

"Oh, don't worry! You shall not suffer for lack of advice, for the judge and I both will be saving it up for you all day, and give it to you in the evenings when you come home to us. I wish you would listen to me about one thing now, though. Mr. Blake——"

My fingers went into my ears. Mr. J. Francis Blake was an obsession, it was quite true, and I had almost come to the point where I would have unburdened my dilemma to her and the judge, but her remarks about "this pawning business" frightened me off.

The twenty-seventh of the month! I never could recount the things that went wrong in the interval through my preoccupation, but when I had ruined a whole set of plates by neglecting to put the sulphite in the developing fluid, I grew desperate, and told Dora I was sure I was threatened with nervous prostration. After I had made some sort of an explanation to nine people who had to be asked for a second sitting, and by the greatest painstaking finished their "counts" in a fairly satisfactory manner, I asked for a day or two of complete rest, in which I might run over to Polk County and see my farm.

I had not yet brought myself to the point where I could tell Dora anything about what was distressing me, for when I thought of it in one day, it seemed perfectly foolish for me to be making such a personal matter of a possible loss to a man I so thoroughly disapproved. That he had squandered some money in order to help me out of a tight place was his own affair, after all, and he probably was lacking in the fine feelings which would make him value the watch and the miniature at their worth of tender association.

Nevertheless, I did trouble about it, and I left the studio with no very well-defined plans as to what I was going to do, except that first I would go to Mr. Blake and offer him a year's board in advance to take care of my horses another season. If this failed, I had some ideas of bearding Bill Miles and wrestling the articles from him by strategy if necessary.

Dora made no comment on my trip, but she followed me to the door and kissed me good-by the second time, with that mother look in her eyes that had first won me to her. I set forth trusting to that fate that cares for drunken men, children, and fools.

The train was almost empty, for people do not go southward in May unless they are compelled to. There were a few drummers, and some turpentine men. I wondered why it is that all turpentine men look alike; all have a certain rotundity of form, over which is always draped a heavy gold chain, and they usually wear diamond studs on all occasions.

I was the only woman aboard, but when the train stopped at my station, I saw a tiny creature descending from the Pullman. The conductor surrounded her with a medley of bags, and when the cars went steaming on, she still stood there looking about her with bright, eager eyes of expectancy. The look faded slowly, as among the crowd of loafers at the depot she saw no familiar face. I watched her a moment, and then she came straight toward me.

With her first words I knew her for English, even before she told me that she was straight from the old country, and that from New York she had telegraphed her arrival to a brother here, who had failed to meet her. Perhaps I knew Colonel Blake? Colonel Blake? That was news to me, but I replied that I did know J. Francis Blake very well, as his grove adjoined my own, and if she cared to accompany me, I should be driving out there directly, as I had come from Deepwater to see that very gentleman on a business matter. He was keeping some horses of mine, I explained indifferently.

The little old lady brightened up at once, and making her comfortable in the waiting room, I hied me to Mr. Miles' livery establishment. While waiting for my rig to be made ready I mentioned to Mr. Miles that a sister of Mr. Blake's had come in unexpectedly, and asked him if he had seen the gentleman that day.

"No, I hain't," said he, with a hateful laugh, "and I'm not a-pinin' to. This is one day I'd rather have his room than his comp'ny. Didn't I tell you about our little transaction?" He patted his vest pocket significantly. "Well, this is the twenty-second of the month?"

"Yes?" I murmured tentatively.

"A fellow like that is liable to forget, or to think a day late won't make any difference, Miss Lingard. That is what I'm countin' on, though if he has any money I hain't heard of it. And he needn't think he'll get the things tomorrow, or even to-day, if he has lost that little slip of paper I signed up!"

So there *was* a ticket or its equivalent. And my only chance was just to have it out with J. Francis Blake, and I scarcely knew which frame of mind I preferred to find him in—the lazy one, or the one which made him turn to the manufacture of unspeakable personal jokes.

As Miss Blake and I drove out along the road, we chatted pleasantly, and I learned that since neither she nor her brother had ever married, the relation between them was one of peculiar closeness, although they had been apart from each other most of the time since he had grown up. This visit to Florida was something she had long contemplated, and had undertaken very suddenly, when her affectionate desire to see him took strong possession of her.

When we turned from the public road into the avenue of wild olive that skirted the drive through his land, I straightened up in my seat with a jump. Such a change? Could I be dreaming? Or, perhaps, after all, he had sold out to some thriftier mortal. Where last I had seen but weeds and dreariness of blackened trees, was a young grove as clean as a lady's boudoir; young, flourishing trees at regular spaces, and between them, in rows as straight as a die, the richest of pea vines. Across the road was a broad field in process of preparation for planting, and from the looks of certain piles of trash at the ends of the plowed rows, I divined that a varied crop of small truck had lately been harvested there.

We drove on up to the house. The hammock was swinging loose in the breeze close by the bench where I had sat that afternoon with Bran's head on my knee. Tom, the negro servant, was raking a close-cut lawn, and in answer

to my question, he said that Mr. Blake had gone to the county seat with a party of gentlemen from the North two days before, but was expected back this morning, at almost any minute.

"So he didn't get my message at all!" exclaimed the little lady, climbing out at once. "Well, I'll be all the greater surprise for him when he does come."

There was nothing for me to do, except to go in with her and wait.

She immediately took possession, selected a room, sent back to the station for her boxes, as she called them, and flitted up and down and all about the silent, cheerless house. It was a pitiful sort of a place, that house. The fields and grove showed a thrift I could not understand, but the house was just what I might have expected, except that one room, downstairs, seemed to have been used as a rather busy office.

Miss Blake insisted that I should follow her around, so I could not help seeing it. It was cluttered up with a mess of papers, and books, and bulletins from various experiment stations; the floor was littered with cigar stumps, and scraps of old envelopes covered with penciled figures. There was a big desk open and covered with dust, and in one corner of the room, behind a saddle, I saw several manila packages directed in my own handwriting. They were his photographs that he had not cared enough about to open! There was a long rack of pipes, some riding crops, and bridles—it was a funny mixture of stable and study! Evidently broom or duster had never invaded the sanctity of that room, and the rest of the house was little better. The cracked teapot, the elephant caddy, and the cups stood on a little muffineer in the hall, and the negro factotum made tea for us, as though it was the expected thing, while we explored.

There was one room that I turned away from when Miss Blake threw open the door, and went within, but I had caught a glimpse of a bare cot, a chair, and a pile of threadbare clothes across its back.

The hours went on, and still he did

not come. His sister sent to town a second time for brooms and cleaning apparatus from the village store, grumbling fussily that Francis should marry—he really should—it was heathenish to live in such a clutter! I almost held my breath, waiting for the mention of Millicent, but not one word did she say about her, though I learned, in the course of her running on, that Francis had been a brave soldier in India, that he had come home ruined in health, and that drifting down to Florida he had invested almost his entire little fortune in this grove which promised to support him without the exertion which he could not afford, if he was to live at all. Of course, there was his half pay, but there were poor relations the two of them had always helped.

"How strange that I am telling you all this!" she exclaimed, her soft cheeks coloring faintly. "You really must pardon me if I am making a bore of myself, but I think my age is beginning to tell, and I miss him so that I can't very well help talking about him while waiting."

The afternoon passed and still he did not come, I helped her in her loving work of tidying things up, thankful only that Dora did and could not see me at it. We had tea together, still expecting every moment to hear the sound of wheels up the drive, and then drifted out to the lawn. The little lady was quite worn out, though she would not admit it, and soon after I had coaxed her into the hammock she was sleeping like a child.

Tom had put a faint light in the office, and I wandered back there; I had seen some books there and a county newspaper. I tried to read, but kept looking at the clock. If J. Francis Blake did not appear by nine o'clock I should be compelled to go back to the station, hunt up Mr. Miles, and have it out with him as best I could. I felt all the more determined, because that day I had heard Miss Blake mention their grandfather's watch which Francis always wore. Her opinion of her brother was very much more exalted than my own, but I could not bear to

think how disappointed she would be if he had to own up that he had lost that watch.

I was very tired, and leaning both arms on his desk, I laid my head down on them to rest. I do not think I went to sleep, but I heard no sound until there was a step in the doorway. I sat up, and there stood the Englishman looking at me in astonishment, but when his eyes met mine, he smiled—and it was the smile of the changed Englishman those photographs had revealed to me. There was no look of indolence there now; but a straightening up of the entire man, and something like a radiance shone from his eyes.

"Did you wish to see me, Miss Lingard?" No teasing, no drollery—just kindness and courtesy. How could I take *this* man to task about a pawn ticket, *this* man who looked so eminently able to take care of himself? I felt little and lonely and left out of everything, just as I had that day I drove away from him down the road, but I managed to falter that I had come to see about my horses.

"Oh, surely! You'd like to see them, of course. I drove in the back way and stabled them myself without calling Tom, as it was so late, you know." He drew *the watch* from his pocket as he spoke and compared it with the clock.

The moment I saw that watch something snapped and broke within me. My head dropped to my arms again and I sobbed—hard, and then the Englishman was kneeling beside me.

"Dear," he whispered; "look at me, and keep your hands away from your eyes, for I may not touch you—I cannot touch you here and now—though I long to take you close and hold you forever!"

Oh, those were beautiful words, and I knew they were true, for his eyes were holding mine fast. I rose, and he with me, but I could not speak for trembling.

"You know it, don't you, Alice? You must have known it all this while? It hasn't needed the words I dared not speak to tell you how your little brave white face shamed me awake that day

on my lawn when you tried to make me take your horses. How could you know how greatly I needed your doubting, to spur me on from time to time? Habits of mind are hard and fast, sweetheart, and I had got so used just to getting along. But it's a poor rose that hasn't some protecting thorns, and I knew I had to win out before I could gather you."

I managed an awful one-sided smile. I wanted to say something, but my lips were still shaking.

"Do you know, dear, you are so much my own; so much a part of me, that I have drawn you here to share my moment of success. For I have worked and schemed as far as an honest man may, and denied myself everything—except photographs—to put this thing through. And now it is done, and the woman I am going to marry may leave all the *en-thusiasm* to me now if she cares to. I was going to-morrow to lay my prospects and myself at your feet."

He laughed the exultant laugh of a schoolboy, did that Englishman, and then dropping on one knee at my feet, he reached into his coat, drew out something, and held face upward to me a check for five thousand dollars, signed James Marbury, for the Polk County Orange and Trucking Company.

"I have the honor," he said, still smiling, "to offer you myself and my first earnings. Will you take us? I will explain further, just as soon as I finish making love."

Then I could laugh, too. "*Don't explain then!*" I replied softly.

He rose, and lifted my hand almost reverently to his lips—that rough, little hand of mine! The action rudely reminded of all that I had forgotten—Dora, and the Millicent of the locket, and the letter. I drew away, sick and ashamed of the way my heart was clinging to him.

"Millicent—" I began.

"Who says Millicent?" came a voice from the doorway. "Oh, Frank—my brother!"

The Englishman faced around at her, astonished, and she flew to him.

"You fraud—you impostor!" she laughed and cried between embraces. "That dreadful, dreary-looking picture of you in a torn tennis coat! How dared you send me such a thing? Of course, it made me leave the Grange within an hour to come and take you home. And here you are, younger and handsomer than ever!"

I hung my head. So *she* was Millicent, and it was my spiteful little trick that had brought her across the ocean. Not once that day had I seen what now seemed so plain, that her sweet, old face was the matured one of the enchanting girl in the locket! "But Millicent *Penland*—" I began.

"Pardon me, Milly dear!" My Englishman disentangled her from about his neck. "This is my stepsister, Miss Pentland, Alice; my foster mother, too, and Milly, this is the woman I am going to marry, now very shortly."

He held out his arms to me now, and I crept within, willing to wait for all the explanations.

"Can you forgive me the way I have always treated you?" I begged, without so much as a glance at The Honorable Millicent, who had come close enough to touch my hair a moment with her hand.

"Forgive you! Didn't I tell you, my brier rose, that I *loved* your thorns?"

The Honorable Millicent put up a dainty palm before her face.

"I don't understand all this at all," said she, "but really you young things are making me blush. What time is it?"

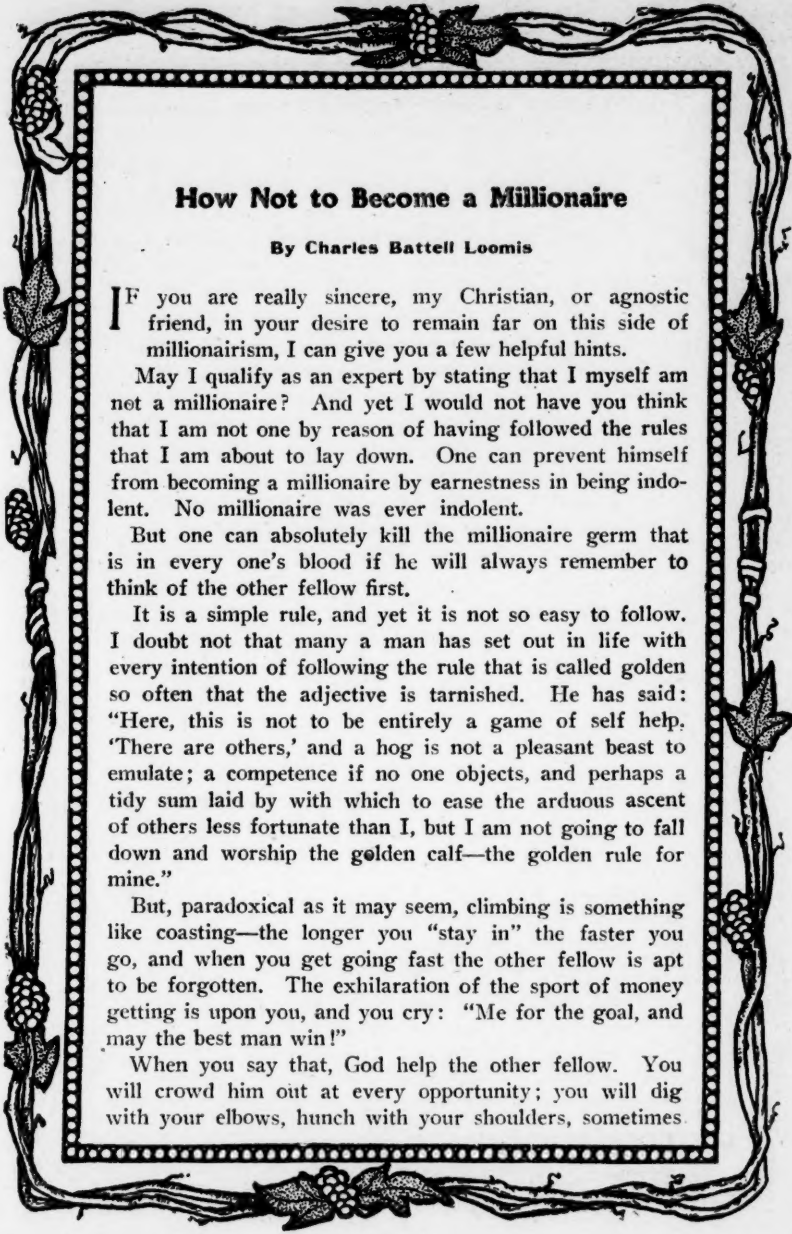
He drew out the watch again. "Ten o'clock," said he.

I reached for that watch, and pressed it against my cheek.

"Now, I wonder what you did that for, when I am here?" inquired my Englishman.

"I'll explain when we finish—other things," I replied happily.

"Don't explain then," he quoted. And then, with an arm about me and one about the Honorable Millicent, we went back to the lawn, because one could sleep any night, but such a one as this could never be again.



How Not to Become a Millionaire

By Charles Battell Loomis

IF you are really sincere, my Christian, or agnostic friend, in your desire to remain far on this side of millionairism, I can give you a few helpful hints.

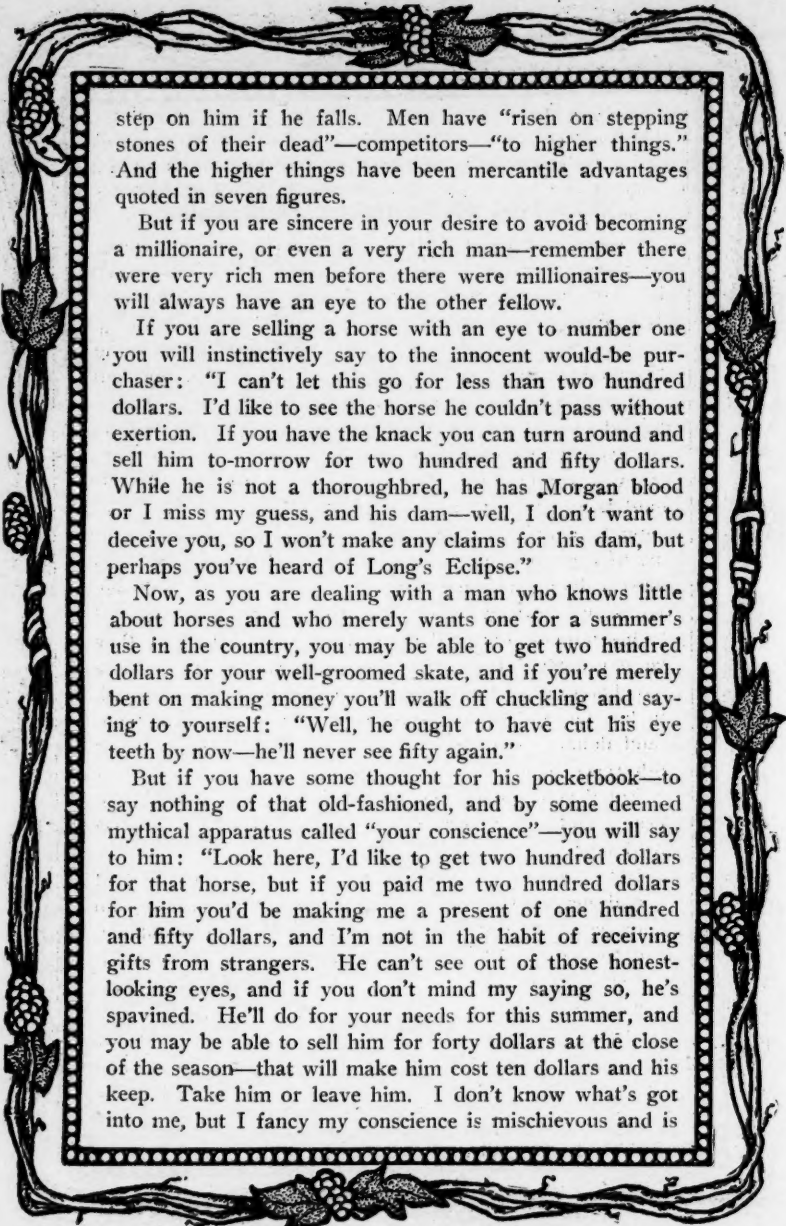
May I qualify as an expert by stating that I myself am not a millionaire? And yet I would not have you think that I am not one by reason of having followed the rules that I am about to lay down. One can prevent himself from becoming a millionaire by earnestness in being indolent. No millionaire was ever indolent.

But one can absolutely kill the millionaire germ that is in every one's blood if he will always remember to think of the other fellow first.

It is a simple rule, and yet it is not so easy to follow. I doubt not that many a man has set out in life with every intention of following the rule that is called golden so often that the adjective is tarnished. He has said: "Here, this is not to be entirely a game of self help. 'There are others,' and a hog is not a pleasant beast to emulate; a competence if no one objects, and perhaps a tidy sum laid by with which to ease the arduous ascent of others less fortunate than I, but I am not going to fall down and worship the golden calf—the golden rule for mine."

But, paradoxical as it may seem, climbing is something like coasting—the longer you "stay in" the faster you go, and when you get going fast the other fellow is apt to be forgotten. The exhilaration of the sport of money getting is upon you, and you cry: "Me for the goal, and may the best man win!"

When you say that, God help the other fellow. You will crowd him out at every opportunity; you will dig with your elbows, hunch with your shoulders, sometimes.



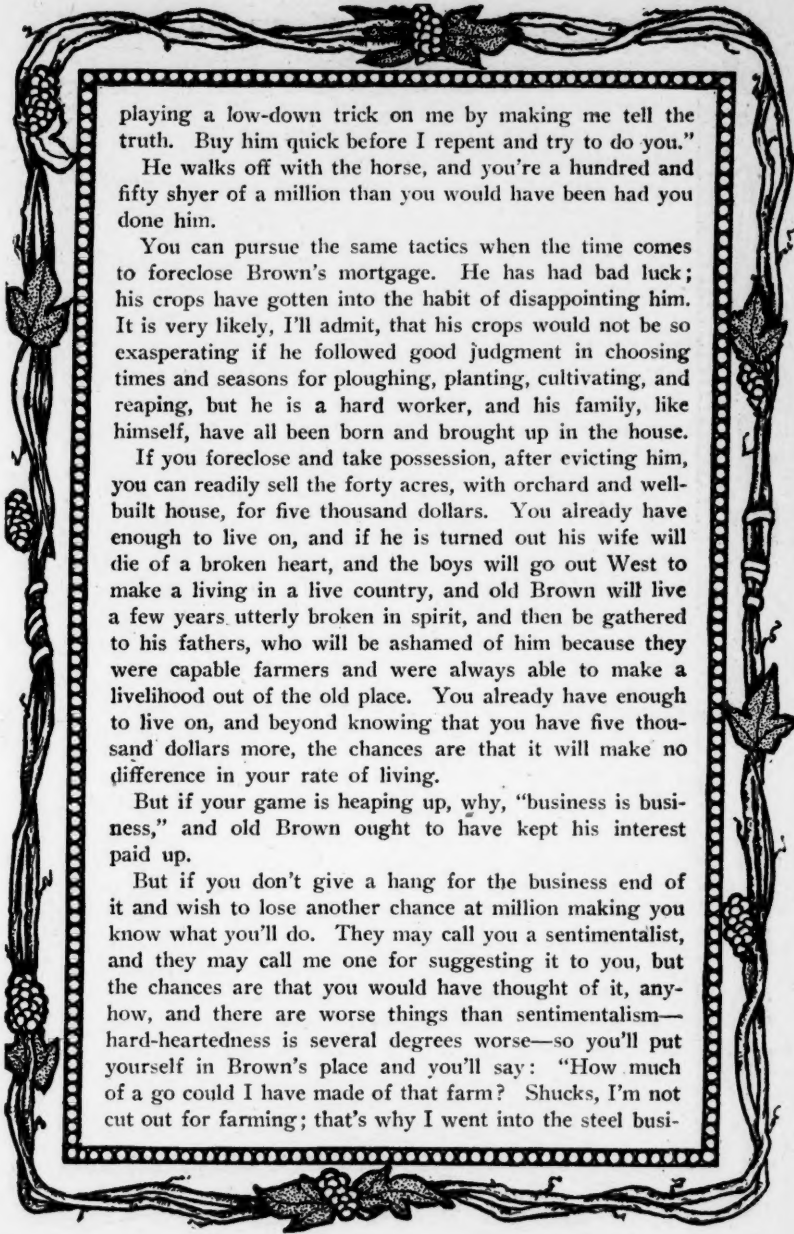
step on him if he falls. Men have "risen on stepping stones of their dead"—competitors—"to higher things." And the higher things have been mercantile advantages quoted in seven figures.

But if you are sincere in your desire to avoid becoming a millionaire, or even a very rich man—remember there were very rich men before there were millionaires—you will always have an eye to the other fellow.

If you are selling a horse with an eye to number one you will instinctively say to the innocent would-be purchaser: "I can't let this go for less than two hundred dollars. I'd like to see the horse he couldn't pass without exertion. If you have the knack you can turn around and sell him to-morrow for two hundred and fifty dollars. While he is not a thoroughbred, he has Morgan blood or I miss my guess, and his dam—well, I don't want to deceive you, so I won't make any claims for his dam, but perhaps you've heard of Long's Eclipse."

Now, as you are dealing with a man who knows little about horses and who merely wants one for a summer's use in the country, you may be able to get two hundred dollars for your well-groomed skate, and if you're merely bent on making money you'll walk off chuckling and saying to yourself: "Well, he ought to have cut his eye teeth by now—he'll never see fifty again."

But if you have some thought for his pocketbook—to say nothing of that old-fashioned, and by some deemed mythical apparatus called "your conscience"—you will say to him: "Look here, I'd like to get two hundred dollars for that horse, but if you paid me two hundred dollars for him you'd be making me a present of one hundred and fifty dollars, and I'm not in the habit of receiving gifts from strangers. He can't see out of those honest-looking eyes, and if you don't mind my saying so, he's spavined. He'll do for your needs for this summer, and you may be able to sell him for forty dollars at the close of the season—that will make him cost ten dollars and his keep. Take him or leave him. I don't know what's got into me, but I fancy my conscience is mischievous and is



playing a low-down trick on me by making me tell the truth. Buy him quick before I repent and try to do you."

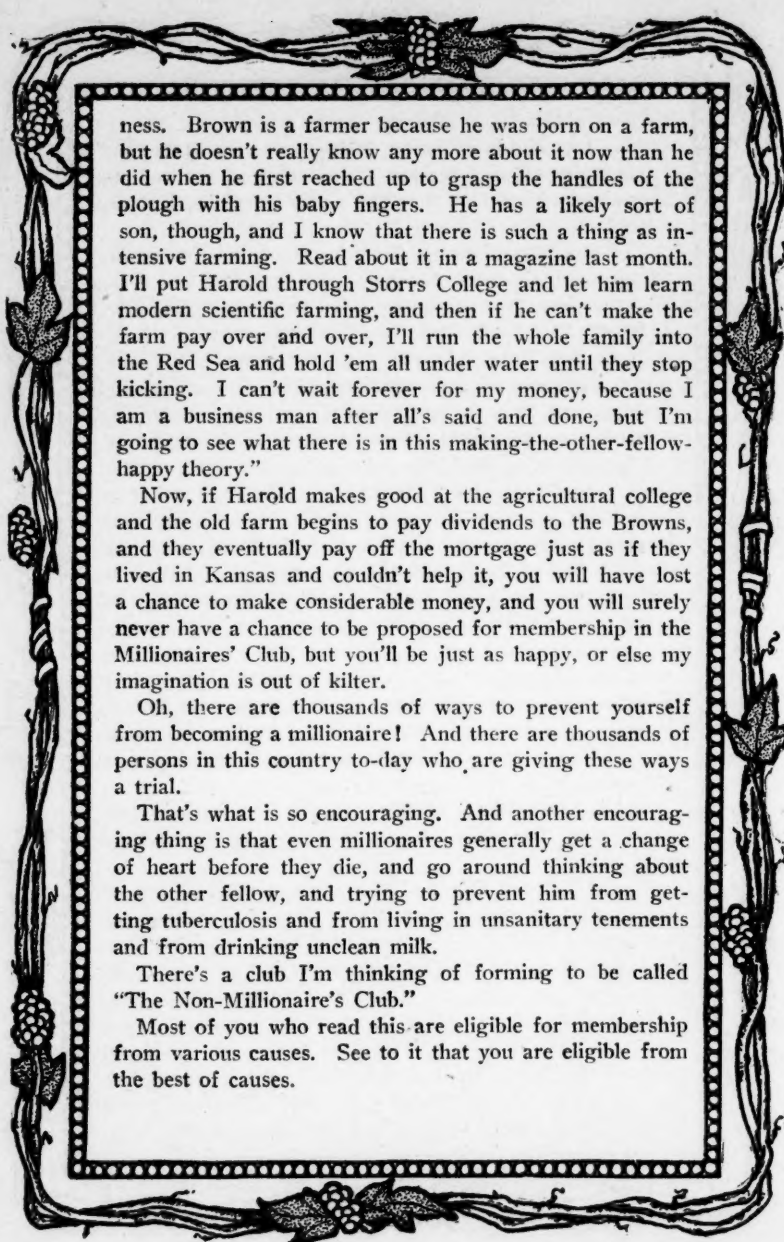
He walks off with the horse, and you're a hundred and fifty shy of a million than you would have been had you done him.

You can pursue the same tactics when the time comes to foreclose Brown's mortgage. He has had bad luck; his crops have gotten into the habit of disappointing him. It is very likely, I'll admit, that his crops would not be so exasperating if he followed good judgment in choosing times and seasons for ploughing, planting, cultivating, and reaping, but he is a hard worker, and his family, like himself, have all been born and brought up in the house.

If you foreclose and take possession, after evicting him, you can readily sell the forty acres, with orchard and well-built house, for five thousand dollars. You already have enough to live on, and if he is turned out his wife will die of a broken heart, and the boys will go out West to make a living in a live country, and old Brown will live a few years utterly broken in spirit, and then be gathered to his fathers, who will be ashamed of him because they were capable farmers and were always able to make a livelihood out of the old place. You already have enough to live on, and beyond knowing that you have five thousand dollars more, the chances are that it will make no difference in your rate of living.

But if your game is heaping up, why, "business is business," and old Brown ought to have kept his interest paid up.

But if you don't give a hang for the business end of it and wish to lose another chance at million making you know what you'll do. They may call you a sentimentalist, and they may call me one for suggesting it to you, but the chances are that you would have thought of it, anyhow, and there are worse things than sentimentalism—hard-heartedness is several degrees worse—so you'll put yourself in Brown's place and you'll say: "How much of a go could I have made of that farm? Shucks, I'm not cut out for farming; that's why I went into the steel busi-



ness. Brown is a farmer because he was born on a farm, but he doesn't really know any more about it now than he did when he first reached up to grasp the handles of the plough with his baby fingers. He has a likely sort of son, though, and I know that there is such a thing as intensive farming. Read about it in a magazine last month. I'll put Harold through Storrs College and let him learn modern scientific farming, and then if he can't make the farm pay over and over, I'll run the whole family into the Red Sea and hold 'em all under water until they stop kicking. I can't wait forever for my money, because I am a business man after all's said and done, but I'm going to see what there is in this making-the-other-fellow-happy theory."

Now, if Harold makes good at the agricultural college and the old farm begins to pay dividends to the Browns, and they eventually pay off the mortgage just as if they lived in Kansas and couldn't help it, you will have lost a chance to make considerable money, and you will surely never have a chance to be proposed for membership in the Millionaires' Club, but you'll be just as happy, or else my imagination is out of kilter.

Oh, there are thousands of ways to prevent yourself from becoming a millionaire! And there are thousands of persons in this country to-day who are giving these ways a trial.

That's what is so encouraging. And another encouraging thing is that even millionaires generally get a change of heart before they die, and go around thinking about the other fellow, and trying to prevent him from getting tuberculosis and from living in unsanitary tenements and from drinking unclean milk.

There's a club I'm thinking of forming to be called "The Non-Millionaire's Club."

Most of you who read this are eligible for membership from various causes. See to it that you are eligible from the best of causes.



THE MAJOR'S SATSUMA JAG

By
C. C. LEYBEE

ILLUSTRATED
BY
SIGURD SCHOU

UNFORTUNATELY for Major Daggett, he had an adoring wife as well as three daughters trained from babyhood to unquestioning obedience. Few men have characters strong enough to withstand that combination, without developing some of the qualities of a domestic tyrant.

Though a lawyer with an excellent local practice, the major had a passion for saving. His wife spoke of it as his "unremitting self-denial." The girls' clothes were considered as gifts rather than necessities, and they had to thank their father for a pair of overshoes as if it were as needless a luxury as a cream puff. He had just closed a deal in some timber lands for a firm in New York, and his daughters felt it was the auspicious hour to go to him with their tremendous requests. An intimate friend was to be married and they wished a suitable present for her, and each one longed for a new gown to wear at the wedding festivities.

The silence in which the major listened was ominous, for his deferred explosions were always the loudest.

"A wedding present for Lillie Raynor? That's all friendship means nowadays—give, give, give! Take a waiter of flowers over to her on the morning

of her wedding, with your good wishes. It will mean a great deal more real affection than a gift for which somebody else has to pay. Three new dresses at once! Why, you've just bought three."

"They were coat suits, dear," suggested his wife timidly.

"And you coolly demand that I shall make myself a shopping agent while I'm in New York!"

"We thought you might get some material cheap at a special sale, father," ventured Carrie.

"The thing which would be cheapened would be my honor, if I took the time that my clients are paying for and put it on hunting for bar-r-gains," thundered the major, as he stalked majestically from the room.

"Your father has such a high sense of honor," sighed the poor little mother, herself as disappointed as the girls. "We needn't have dessert the week that he is North, and we can save enough from the housekeeping money to buy the linen, and each of you can embroider something pretty for Lillie. You might take the flowers, too. That was a sweet suggestion of your father's."

A week later the major was seated in a private dining room in one of the

most sumptuous of the New York hotels. It had been ten years since he had been in the city, and the scene was one of astonishing luxury to him. The dinner was given in his honor by the firm of timber men, for, though they thought the major a pompous old fossil, they would clear a hundred thousand out of the options he had secured for them on virgin forests, and they

cockles of his heart, and when the champagne appeared, he felt that it would be a wicked extravagance to refuse what was flowing so freely—in both senses of the word.

After dinner, one of the men proposed bridge. It was a regular diversion of the major's; but, as he played with his daughters, he had never played for a stake, nor even considered



"You're a Chinaman for luck," said one of Major Daggett's adversaries.

bent themselves to giving him a memorable evening.

Now, the major was the most abstemious of men. The dessertspoonful of blackberry cordial, which his wife administered when his tongue looked furred, was a different proposition from the Manhattan cocktail which he had sipped with increasing enjoyment. It was almost impossible for him to decline anything for which some one else had paid. The Manhattan warmed the

it in connection with the game. The familiar phases of the cards seemed to recall him to himself, in a measure. He had never held such consecutive good hands, and it all seemed in keeping with the magical evening and the hazy and golden atmosphere in which he seemed to float. His partner, surprised at finding good bridge material, played their luck for all it was worth, and stopped with reluctance when additional potations closed the major's eyes.

"You're a Chinaman for luck," said one of Major Daggett's adversaries. "I believe no-trumps is your regular make."

He shoved a stack of crisp greenbacks across the table. The major saw that his partner was putting a similar pile in his pocket, so he stuck the bills in his. He didn't understand where they came from, nor why he rose and hugged the waiter and sobbed on his shoulder, but it was all very pleasant.

"Better get him to his hotel as quickly as you can," suggested one of the men.

His recent partner called a cab. Two drove up—no, one cab, with two drivers. The major was helped in, but when they drove past a drug store he insisted that he wanted to get out and buy a parrot, that he had a green parrot when he was a boy, and he would have another. His friend soothed him, but when they passed a store with a small red flag hanging in front of the door, nothing could keep the major in the cab. It proved to be an auction sale of Oriental goods, and the suave Japanese auctioneer was asking if it was possible that New Yorkers, who knew so well the value of a bargain, could let that beautiful Satsuma chocolate set go for a fraction of its real value?

"Lemme get nearer," panted the major thickly. "Le' him see that a Southern shentleman knows a bargain as well as any durn Yankee!"

He vociferously raised the bid.

When they left the place, an hour later, his ex-partner at bridge was mopping his brow and vowing to himself that whatever his firm made in the timber deal, he had well earned it.

When the major awoke, at noon the next day, his head felt as it had never felt since the commencement when he was a sophomore. He seemed vaguely to recall an almond-eyed man, who handed him an umbrella jar; vaguely to remember a thick stack of bills.

But no jar was in his room, so clearly that was a dream; and no money in his pocket, so, of course, he could never have gambled.

The major had been at home several days, with his digestion causing him so much annoyance that his wife declared to the girls that the food in New York must be the worst in the world.

There was a ring at the bell; and Carrie, laying aside the embroidery she was doing for Lillie Raynor's wedding present, went to the door, and then called her mother. That little lady returned to the near-sickroom with a puzzled air.

"Dear, there are some packages, with express due," she began.

A growl from her spouse interrupted her.

"Can't you pay a quarter to an expressman out of your housekeeping allowance, without annoying me about it? Is a sick man to be harassed by every trifle?"

"But it isn't a quarter, dearest. It's eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents. There are large packages and smaller ones, all marked from a Japanese bazaar. It must be a mistake."

Again there flashed upon the major's inward eye a smiling Oriental face.

"Perhaps it is that little surprise I bought for you in New York, my dear. But the express charges are absurd. I'll see the driver."

He hobbled to the door. There were seventeen packages, all addressed to him in the same neat, foreign hand. He paid the charges and had the boxes brought into his room. Carrie, Amy, and Rosa were tiptoe with excitement as they brought hammer and hatchet, opened the boxes, and began to unfold the wrapping paper. A huge Nankin ware umbrella stand and a brass jardinière with entwined dragons came first to light. The major's eyes had exactly the look that they wore when a witness made a damaging admission and he was afraid his opponents would find it out.

"A gift for you, mother," he said blandly to his wife. "You've been talking about how bare the hall looks."

"I'm sure I never meant to complain," she said, in a pleased flutter. "How beautiful they are, and how



By the time the contents of the boxes were all displayed, the room looked like a tea house on the Midway.

thoughtful you were! Oh, Amy, how pretty!"

This was in reference to the Satsuma chocolate pot and a dozen cups and saucers to match. The girls cried in an enraptured chorus:

"Oh, mother, won't it be lovely to use them the next time our book club meets?"

"I—I thought of that," remarked the major. "But twelve cups would be hardly sufficient."

This was by way of preparation for the blue-gowned Japanese lady standing by Fuji-yama, which he spied on

another cup. Carrie pounced upon them, and began to unwrap them.

"A dozen of these darling teacups, too! Nobody in town will have prettier china for their club meetings than we!"

"Here are more cups and saucers," said Rosa, mystified, bringing forth a dozen, in green Canton, with a quaint teapot to match. "I think these are the prettiest of all, but how could we use so many?"

The major proved that he deserved his reputation for resourcefulness when he explained:

"I thought you asked me to bring you something to give Lillie."

"Father, what an angel you were to take the time to get it! Now we understand why you stayed over in New York another day. We did so hate to give Lillie pieces of embroidery."

"Now we can keep for ourselves the things we were embroidering," suggested the practical Amy, who inherited something of her father's thrift.

By the time the contents of the boxes were all displayed, the room looked like a tea house on the Midway. It seemed to the major that the weazened faces of the "thousand wise men" were peering at him with amused understanding, and he knew that as long as he lived he would have a sick distaste for the scaly folds of a dragon or the smoking summit of Fuji-yama.

"I must have won a sinful amount of money at that bridge game," he thought.

The girls were happily discussing the rearrangement of the sitting room, and the mother planning to store away a few duplicate pieces for future wedding gifts, as they opened the last box. It was long and flat.

"What on earth is that?" ejaculated Amy, as Rosa held up a man's kimono in yellow crêpe de chine, embroidered in chrysanthemums.

The major exploded, relieved to find an opportunity to vent his pent-up emotions.

"Do you grudge me a dressing gown? Everything else is for you girls and your mother, yet you cavil at a single personal expenditure! You would revel in Satsuma and bronze, and have me wear for ten years longer this old blanket dressing gown I've worn five years."

"No, no, father, darling; you mis-



He realized himself that pale yellow is not suited to the complexion of a gentleman of sixty-two with liver trouble.

understand, really. I—somehow I didn't think of your wearing it."

"Not wear it!" he echoed indignantly. "I can hardly wait to get out of this rag, and get into something respectable."

He threw off the offending blanket robe, and, assisted by his wife, slipped into the crêpe kimono, with its pendant sleeves almost touching the floor. Beautiful as the garment was in itself, it made the major look like a living statue of Jaundice.

"Here's—here's a blue one, father," suggested Rose. "And a pink one."

He answered the interrogation of her eyes:

"If I am to be subject to these periods of illness, at least I am entitled to a change of garments."

"Yes, dear; yes, indeed," soothed his wife. "I see that Robert Curtis is coming up the steps. Shall I bring him in here?"

Major Daggett cast a hasty glance at the mirror. He realized himself that

pale yellow is not suited to the complexion of a gentleman of sixty-two with liver trouble.

"I look like a bleached pumpkin," he thought grimly.

He picked up the blue kimono. At least, it could not be worse.

"Wait a moment. I'll try on this one, I believe."

When Robert Curtis came into the room, only the fact of his engagement to Carrie restrained him from an audible outburst. His daily association with the major as law partner had hardly prepared him for the sight of that gentleman scowling over a heavenly blue garment, across which a flight of butterflies winged their way.

"He looked like a thunder cloud above an expanse of June sky," Curtis confided to his brother afterward.

When the girls trooped back into the room after their father had finished looking over his mail, they found him smoking peacefully in the old dressing gown. On the bed lay the sheen of blue and yellow draperies, and in the

box was the rose kimono, with its wealth of embroidered cherry blossoms.

"I find that these Japanese affairs have not sufficient warmth for me," he stated casually. "They might give me rheumatism across the shoulders. You girls may have them. Now, take them along, and stop talking about them. I want to answer my letters."

From the next room, he could hear their excited comments to their mother.

"Dearest, father has given us these exquisite things! There is plenty of material in each to make a dress for Lillie's wedding. They will be the loveliest gowns there, and so different from the other girls'!"

"It is my firm belief that your father bought them for that very purpose," declared Mrs. Daggett. "He is the best man in the world."

"And the most generous," cooed Rosa.

"I have never had such an astonishing morning in my life," added Amy.

"Nor have I," muttered the major to himself.





AS A DREAM WHEN ONE AWAKETH OF VIRGINIA MIDDLETON

ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

IT has always seemed to me that the plain child dowered with a passionate love of beauty starts life badly handicapped. I, myself, was such a one, and my thralldom to the outward loveliness of others has made of my life what must appear to the world a sad piece of wreckage, and even to me a sad piece of folly.

I was seven—a creature all thin legs and arms, and dark, reddish hair, and lonely, big, brown eyes—when my father promised to assuage my loneliness by bringing home a new mother and a new sister for me. I did not accompany him to the city where his second nuptials took place, but waited, excited, tremulous, hopeful, in our big house, that so sadly needed the presence of a woman. The days before he returned seemed interminable; as a

matter of fact, he and my stepmother took the briefest of wedding journeys, and were back in Washington with my stepsister, Corinna, before two weeks had passed.

The housekeeper and my own old colored nurse had both tried to implant the seeds of jealousy in me; I think they suspected that a new mistress would mean the abrupt termination of their lax rule in the house. When they had failed utterly in clouding my expectations, because I was all eagerness for a playmate, all hope of some one who would "mother" me, let me sit on her lap as she rocked, croon little melodies to me, tuck me in bed at night, treat me altogether as some of the lucky children on our block were treated—they said to each other that I was a queer, heartless little brat, or I would

not so joyfully welcome a successor to my mother; my poor mother, who was the most wraithlike of memories to me.

But not even their harsh criticism subdued my ardor. And on the afternoon when my father returned I could not be kept in bounds, and decorously await his coming in the parlor, brushed and starched to a degree of stiffness unknown hitherto in my career, but I must be out at the end of the long path, swinging upon the iron gate, and watching excitedly for the carriage that was to bring him home.

It so happened that its arrival threw me into a blue funk of terror. I was paralyzed by a sudden embarrassment. Otherwise, I should have fled to the uttermost ends of the earth, as represented by the alley at the foot of the back yard. Being, however, powerless to move, I clung limply to the iron rods of the fence, and awaited the appearances from the carriage. First came dad, looking brighter, handsomer, hopefuller than I had ever seen him look in all the years of our lonely life together. He stood upon the curb, extending a hand toward the carriage door to help some one to alight, but his quick glance was turned toward the house and toward me.

He smiled radiantly when he saw me at my post, and called out: "There you are, Tootsey! I knew you would be there."

And then some one, fair and pretty and kind-looking, stepped upon the pavement, and, not waiting for him, came swiftly to the gate. I have forgotten now with what endearing exclamation the new Mrs. Carrington bent over me, but I remember that my heart swelled with a sudden sense of gratitude and loyalty.

When she stood up from her embrace of me, I saw that my father had helped a young girl out, and that she was approaching the gate, while dad paid the driver of the hack, and dismissed it. And, with that first vision of Corinna Neilson, I suppose my fate in life was sealed. Anything so lovely I thought I had never beheld. I feasted my eyes upon her as she undulated toward us.

To-day recollection seems to supply me with something supercilious in the glance she cast upon our old house, but perhaps that is merely my knowledge of all the years that came after. Certainly, at the moment, I was aware of nothing but of grace, of dazzling, blond hair, of wide, laughing, dark-fringed, gray eyes, of the delicious curves and the delicious color that belong to children and sun-ripened fruits. She was older than I by seven or eight years and all my nature abased itself before her. Beauty had come to dwell in my house, and I was its bonds slave.

I am thirty now, and I know myself very well—the weaknesses of my temperament, and the strengths that have served me worse than weaknesses. I know that, all my youth long, my eyes were dazzled by loveliness, that I could not resist its sway, that it owned me as drink might own a man born with an unconquerable craving for it. That was my chief weakness. That it should have been mixed with a miserable tenacity of affection, with an indomitable loyalty, with an unquenchable pity for pain, was my greatest misfortune. It was not that I lacked perception of the inward faults in the characters of those whose outward attractions made me their worshipers, but that, however clearly I perceived littleness or meanness or falsity, I still had to be faithful to the love I gave them because of their beauty.

Certainly it was so with my stepsister, Corinna. I was not a stupid child, and in two months I knew that she was idle, selfish, vain, and false, though this knowledge never saved me from her domination. I was her willing fag. From me she expected countless small services, on me imposed countless restraints. When wiseacres or sentimentalists talk about the care-free, happy days of childhood, I often wonder how many people had the same childish experience as I—such hot, burning misery, such wounded feelings, such rebuffed affection. I think they could take the world from me now—they have done it, almost—and I would not suffer half so much as I used to suffer

when Corinna was moved to withdraw herself from my worshiping services. This she did every now and then—when some more faithful servitor appeared, or when she wished to punish me for some fancied negligence on my part.

Her mother did not know all the indignities she practiced upon me—the new Mrs. Carrington was a soft-hearted soul, and she would have tried to curb her daughter's arrogance and vanity if she had perceived them. But the dear lady never saw anything that went on below the surface of things. And since she found in Corinna's looks a subject for maternal pride, and in Corinna's general behavior no cause for alarm, she did not search further. She was as dear to me as I had dreamed she might be, and so long as she lived I never felt again the ache of the neglected child. But, having swiftly transferred most of my allegiance to Corinna, when I saw her at the garden gate that first day, I took my stepmother's sweetness and kindness almost as casually as did her own daughter.

If I had anything that Corinna wanted, she had no scruple in taking it. Any momentary qualm which I might have felt at seeing my few treasures appropriated was swallowed up in pride that Corinna considered them worthy of use. Sometimes my stepmother would observe that Corinna was wearing my locket or my new sash, and would inquire how this happened. But as I was always full of eagerness to explain that I wanted Corinna to wear these articles of adornment, and as Corinna always smiled as though gently ridiculing my generosity, or accepting it merely for my own sake, Mrs. Carrington did not interfere.

And so it was with everything. My time was Corinna's. When she had no companions of her own age—and there were frequent intervals when her contemporaries evidently found her unbearable and left her to her own devices and to the solace of my own inventions—she honored me with much of her company. When, however, she

was on good terms with the girls and boys of her own age in our neighborhood, I was roughly pushed aside. I merely "hung around," hopeful of some stray half hour that she might offer to me—a spiritless little animal, accepting cuffs and always waiting the pat of reconciliation, and the contemptuously tossed bone of brief companionship.

As Corinna grew older and "came out," and I grew older in my degree, it was discovered, to our common joy, that there were no end of things I could do for her. I could mend the silk stockings she danced into threads at parties; I could run ribbons through her laces; I could keep her bureau drawers in order, and was allowed the inestimable privilege of handling her veils and scarfs and gloves and all the scented little fripperies of her top drawer. When she slept late in the morning, mine was sometimes the honorable privilege of carrying up her tray of toast and chocolate. I can remember that, on one occasion, by an ingenious arrangement of cords between my bed and the front door, I contrived to awaken when she came in from a dance, merely that I might creep to the door of her room and see her in her shimmering splendor of white and crystals.

The years taught Corinna a good deal of discretion. At twenty, she was as indolent as ever, as cold-hearted, and as selfish, but she had eliminated overbearing bad manners from her category of faults. She no longer snapped, she no longer rebuffed rudely. Quite as effectively as ever, however, did she manage to command my time as when her methods were more crude.

It was when I was fifteen and Corinna twenty-two that my father decided to send me to boarding school. I pleaded with him passionately. It seemed to me that I could not bear an existence removed from the immediate neighborhood of my goddess, but father, perhaps for that very reason, was firm. I went away for a year, which, I am almost inclined to think, was the most miserable I have ever spent.



Corinna, whom he had brought back to be the very crown of his life.

There may have been beauties in my school—among two hundred well-born, well-nourished young girls there must necessarily have been—but all my thoughts were upon my own lovely sister. I used to write her long letters, which she sometimes answered with a scrawled line or two, telling me of the gayeties she was enjoying, and of the furore she was creating—Corinna had the naïveté of a very vain woman. She was insatiable of admiration, but very credulous of all who offered it to her. I gathered from these screeds now and then that she missed me, or missed the

work that I had been wont to do for her, and that thought filled me with pride.

During the last half of the year, fortunately, I became somewhat interested in my studies, and, although I still yearned for Corinna and was still prepared, like any knight of old, to do battle for her peerlessness, I was not quite so abjectly miserable as I had been at first.

When I went home in June, I was met with the announcement that Corinna was going to be married. At first I experienced a sick wave of jealousy.

That was followed by an instant conviction that no one worthy of her could have been found in our circle of acquaintances. What king of men, what leader of armies, what master of the world, had come to claim her? For one less high than these was not fit mate for her!

My father and mother laughed a little at my feeling, so far as they divined it—Corinna was away visiting the relatives of her prospective husband. Perhaps it was fortunate that I had a few days in which to accustom my mind to the thought of losing her before I saw her again. By the time that she returned from Philadelphia, where the most fortunate of men dwelt, I had my mind adjusted to the new thought. I was unhappy, I saw the situation in a tragic light, but I was able to control the outward manifestations of my feelings, I was able to meet Corinna without many tears.

Corinna, more beautiful than ever, glowing with health, with satisfaction—perhaps with fulfilled ambition, for she, in her lazy way, was ambitious, and the man to whom she was engaged was rich—smiled down upon me from her superior height; she was tall, with a figure that promised voluptuousness in its later development, but that was now merely supple, rounded grace.

"Wait until you see him," she told me, reading in my glance some protest against him my loyal lips kept back.

I saw him the next day, and realized that she had spoken rightly. Once again my impressionable nature yielded itself to the subjection of perfect beauty.

At thirty, beauty is something other than it was at sixteen, and vice versa. But even now, for all my changed standards, and for all the wretchedness that has changed them, I think Gerard Freylinghuysen one of the handsomest men in the world. His is not a strong face, and I have come to prefer strength and rugged character to anything else in physiognomy. But for all its latent weakness—it was like some of the faces we know in the Restoration portraits—for all the nar-

rowness, the querulousness, which my eyes can now see marked in every feature, he is still one at whom young girls turn to look in the street. Tall, slender, with the graceful motions of a fencer, with lustreless black hair and olive skin, he carries still about him an air of poetic distinction different from, infinitely more compelling than, the distinction of mere prosperity—though that, too, was in his bearing.

When I first saw him standing in the drawing-room beside my sister, I thought him the most beautiful thing I had ever seen except her. My heart leaped up in a foolish burst of instinctive thanksgiving that these two had found each other. Everything which to my older mind marks weakness and meanness in him was but an added charm. The brooding of his eyes was a melancholy attraction; a curious alertness of his bearing—I know now that he is alert always for offense against his own treasured dignity—was pride, noble pride. His moodiness, of which I became aware before I had known him two days, was the aloofness of a high soul discontented with the sordid surroundings of the world.

Of course, I was a foolish, romantic young girl, in love with beauty, in love with love in all its manifestations. Corinna's engagement was a fairy story enacted before me—a fairy story enacted for a child who labored under the most youthful of all delusions, that she had put away childish toys and childish plays. I accepted Gerard fully and entirely, not because he was Corinna's choice and I was Corinna's loyal friend, but because he fitted into the fairy story so completely. I closed my eyes and shut my ears against every sight and sound that would spoil the golden romance for me. If Gerard was querulously jealous, and I—being, as I said, not at all a stupid child—could not help knowing of his peevishness, it was only a proof of his devotion to his princess and mine. If Corinna was cold, as indeed she was, to the very marrow of her being, that to the sixteen-year-old fancy was but the adorable inaccessibility of a divinity; if she

was out-and-out provoking, that was but the charming coquetry of a French marquise. So the faults, the very obvious faults, of my two adored ones became transmuted into virtues in my definition.

There was one awful period of three days when it seemed almost that the engagement would have another, more abrupt, ending than that decreed for it at the altar. After this lapse of years I have forgotten exactly what Corinna's original crime was. It may possibly have been the acceptance of another man's smiles or attentions or flowers; it may have been some failure in loving deference to Gerard. At any rate, he took her strongly to task for it; and Corinna, either grown too secure of her own charms, or perhaps, wearied out by his frequent objections to her course of action, flouted him, and instead of promising amendment intimated that it would be no heartbreaking calamity to her if he should withdraw from her society, and stay withdrawn.

Gerard liked to surround the simple happenings of life, in so far as he took part in them, with a good deal of form and ceremony. Instead of slamming out of the door and stamping down the garden path after Corinna's insubordinate speech, it seems that he arose with much dignity, and demanded to see my father. When word came to him to join dad in the library, he as ceremoniously returned Corinna to the parental charge, so to speak, as he had ceremoniously demanded the privilege of paying her his addresses six months before. I gathered from what I overheard among the elders of the family that evening that dad had further ruffled the young man's ruffled temper by treating the whole affair as an episode, rather as a laughable episode.

When dad told my stepmother how the lover had resented his offhand manner, I was all one flame of sympathy with Gerard. I almost hated these commonplace, elderly persons who laughed at high and holy anger, who shrugged at the thought of a broken heart. In my mind's eye, I could see

Gerard, so tall, so solemn, so pale in righteous wrath, with such sombre eyes burning beneath his high forehead, with his tousled black hair thrown back from his brow with such poetic grace! I half hated Corinna for having brought things to such a pass, and I half pitied her for having lost so wonderful a lover. I could not sleep that night for thinking of the anguish of Gerard; Corinna, in the room adjoining mine, slept peacefully and sweetly for nine full hours, and awoke, round as a kitten, pink as a rose.

Of course, the little quarrel was made up, and I basked once more in the unclouded sunshine of romance. Never was any girl happier, more tremulously miserable, and altogether rapturous than I. I could not bear the thought of losing the beauty from our house, but it was so altogether appropriate that I should lose her to the all-compelling Gerard. I thought, I suppose, that I myself was capable of giving him a great devotion had not my years and his previous engagement prevented—it seems to me that some such acid used to flavor the saccharine sweetness of my general attitude.

Once, when a box of pale tea roses had come to Corinna from him, and I was present at their opening—as when was I not present?—she laughed at me and tossed me one of them. I was horrified; she should not offer a rose of her lover's even to the dearest of the outside world, and when, in broken speech, I tried to tell her so and she laughed at me and told me that it ought to be I whom Gerard was to marry, for I was as crazily romantic as he, I rushed from the room in a tempest of mixed feelings. But I had the rose in my hand. I found it the other day, brown and ready to crumble into dust at a touch or a breath of air, in a little box of old keepsakes—such stuff as dreams are made of!

In due course of time they were married, and set sail for Europe, and I went back to school. I stayed there only a little while, for my stepmother's health began to fail, and I was needed at home. Corinna did not return from

abroad, even when her mother's illness became acute, and it was not until after her death that her daughter reappeared among us.

The two years had changed me a good deal. I still adored beauty, still cherished my romantic dreams, was still passionately loyal. But I had touched some of the realities of existence, and I was growing really older. I saw more beneath the surface of things; but, strangely, perhaps, deeper knowledge of life and character had not yet begun to harden my heart, but rather to soften it. It seemed such a pity, such a lamentable, wretched pity, that, in a world where there was so much outward beauty and such rich possibilities of joy, there should be so little real satisfaction!

The two years abroad had done wonderful things to Corinna; her beauty was riper, more pronounced, more assured. She was a peerless creature of the kind that self-consciousness rather becomes. She shone through the mourning that she wore, like a moon emerging, triumphant, from a bank of storm clouds.

Gerard, it required no diviner to see, was a dissatisfied man. He was as handsome as ever, and he and his wife could not walk half a block without provoking stares of admiration, and even whispers, but the lines were beginning to be marked upon his face, and they were lines of querulousness and peevishness—the markings of a man who has not obtained from life what he thinks his rights. If I did not interpret his face thus at that time, it was because too much of the romantic child yet lingered in me. Or was it that too much of the protective mother had already entered into me? For I was only touched with pity and a sense of injustice because Gerard had not found what he wanted in the world.

They had come home to stay, they announced, and they proceeded to insure considerable permanency of residence near us by building a little way from my father's house. Corinna was as idle as ever. She hated to be bothered with the details, first of building,

and then of furnishing the place. It soon became her habit to shift most of this work to me.

"Ellen simply adores plans," she told Gerard. "She is the most practical person in the world—talk to her about the number of closets and the width of the tread of the stairs. Whatever she says is sure to be right, and it will satisfy me a thousand times better than ever having to look at one of those miserable blue prints again."

Gerard frowned. It did not comport at all with his idea of his dignity, and the dignity of any undertaking in which he might be interested, that his wife should shift her duties in the matter to her young stepsister. He gathered the rolls of plans which had been the occasion of the remark into a bundle, and left the room, with an air of much offense.

"Don't ever get married, Nell," advised his wife, as he went out. "There's no fun in it, at all."

I told her that I did not blame her husband in the least. I grew quite hot in his defense, but Corinna only laughed at me, and settled herself more comfortably among the cushions on the window seat, and demanded a box of bonbons to be placed at her elbow, and looked all the time so adorable that I forgot my anger against her, and my sympathy with Gerard. I think the interview ended by my brushing her beautiful hair for half an hour and helping to dress her for a garden party at one of the neighbors'.

"Such a little thing," said Corinna, "that there's really no harm in my going, even if I am in black."

Whether it was Gerard, or the architects and decorators, or Corinna and father, or I that brought it about, I don't know, but I do know that when they were installed by and by in their new house it was very beautiful and a fit setting for its mistress. Her own room was particularly lovely, with a view across the grounds and open country surrounding them—we lived in suburban Washington—toward the Virginia hills. The only times I have ever seen any trace of thought or feeling

in my sister I sometimes saw when she looked out through the wide windows and across those hills. Something a little dreamy would then soften the splendor of her beauty, something a little mystic dim her magnificent materialism. But whether it was that the sight of the hills awakened in her some faint response, or whether it was some deeper emotion, I have never known.

Corinna had always flirted mildly, both during her engagement and after her marriage. But the flirtations did not seem to me serious enough to be matters of family concern. They were rather her instinctive greed of admiration than any dangerous impulse to give lavishly of herself. She was tremendously vain, and her vanity needed constant and varied food. But her flirtations, however mild and harmless, were particularly obnoxious to her husband, who had his own equally strong vanity; he thought—I know it now, though then I interpreted it differently—daily and hourly of his dignity. He regarded it as an outrage upon a cherished possession that Corinna should ever toss a provocative smile over her shoulder at one of her train of harmless adorers. At the same time, he felt it almost equally incumbent upon that dignity of his not to take her to task for her flirtations. The consequence was that he was always taking her to task for something else as a cover to his real annoyance. A cat-and-dog life they had come to lead in a remarkably short time.

That her affair with George Dermott passed beyond the usual safe boundaries which she set for her coquetties, and became a matter of real feeling with her, I never believed until lately. Indeed, I am not sure that I believe it now. George Dermott was a man of different calibre from those who had dangled their week or their month in Corinna's train, and then made way for some newcomer. He was a seasoned man of the world—no boy, to wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at. For the most part, we had been justified in referring

to Corinna's attachés as "Corinna's kindergarten," but George Dermott would never have fitted into any kindergarten. He had the reputation, too, as a master player in the game of hearts, but he was not held so blameless as my stepsister. So that, when she entered upon the risky pastime with him, I do not know how far her heart was stirred; and, though I know now that she ventured farther than her wont, I do not know whether it was love or the blind desire for conquest, the blind lust of vanity, that led her on.

Gerard's jealousy was very obvious now, and the sympathy of both my father and myself was altogether with him. But Corinna brooked no interference; and, indeed, Gerard asked for no help from the family. I suppose it was witnessing all those last weeks of their life together that fully awoke in me the protective tenderness for Gerard which was the rock upon which my own happiness was eventually wrecked. Here he was, a man whom I had first seen with a child's beauty-dazed eyes as a prince of men and a prince of lovers—here was he, despised, ill treated by my own sister for the sake of some one who, to my still youthful vision, was in no respect his equal. I could not hate Corinna—I loved her too much for that, I was too accustomed to being her slave and servitor. But I had learned at last to criticise her in my mind freely, fiercely, angrily, and with every criticism my passionate pity for Gerard grew stronger.

I wonder if I ought to say that I am glad that it was death and no scandalous calamity that ended it? Had Corinna lived, my own life must have been so different, no matter how she managed or mismanaged hers. So long as she was on the earth, I must have thought of Gerard as her husband, and so long as I thought of him so, my own heart, for all its weakness, must have been safe.

But she died swiftly, almost suddenly, in the midst of her affair with George Dermott. How far it had gone, as I have said before, I did not know

then. When the great, gaunt fact of death stalked among us, he and all that he stood for were forgotten. Corinna alive and healthful was Corinna criticised, Corinna in danger of losing love. Corinna suddenly dead in the midst of her life and beauty, quenched as a mighty wind from the mountains quenches a little light, was Corinna established again forever in our hearts.

Gerard was utterly absorbed by his grief. Every recollection of her, except of her perfections, was sponged out from his mind. All the little lazinesses against which he had fruitlessly argued, all the languid selfishness which he had resented as a personal affront, all the vanities and extravagances at which he had unavailingly carped, these were clean gone from his memory. Corinna, the beauty whom he had wooed and won, Corinna, the matchless creature—and, therefore, a fit mate for him—with whom he had traveled the wide world over, Corinna, whom he had brought back home to be the very crown of his life—that was the Corinna he remembered.

He gave orders that her room should be locked, and left exactly as she had left it. He gave orders that no hireling foot was ever to cross its sacred threshold. He, himself, carried its key. Then he found that he could not bear the great, lonely house, "the house we built, the house in which we were to be so happy together," he declared, forgetting how little Corinna had helped in the building, and how far from happy they had begun to be. And I forgot, too. Gerard was to me a man bereft of the holiest happiness in the world. I, too, was bereft—such beauty had gone out of life, beauty that I so long had loved and served.

By and by, he found he could not longer bear the lonely place, and he closed it up and went abroad again. I was twenty-one when he went away from home, and during the two years before he came back I had my five or six chances to fall in love and marry. There was nothing of beauty about me as there had been about my stepsister, but I had grown up into a passable-

looking girl, and had even acquired some slight reputation for the way in which I wore my clothes, and for my conversational powers. Admirers were not lacking, altogether. But I did not want to fall in love, I did not want to marry. I used to look out of our windows daily toward the big house where Corinna had lived, and I felt tragically that life was over for me, that I had had my existence in theirs, hers and Gerard's, so to speak. I had known the fullness of life vicariously, as it were. With such folly I wasted my days.

Later, Gerard came home, still the grief-stricken man, still the inconsolable husband. He was paler than ever, and his pallor made him even more "interesting-looking," as young girls called it. He came a great deal to our house, of course. Where else would he find any one who would listen to him talk by the hour of Corinna? Where else would he find any one to cap his anecdotes of her with other and yet earlier ones?

I suppose that I loved him—perhaps I had loved him since the first day I saw them together. Surely, though, it was an unselfish, childlike love, for, when one day he broke into weeping, and begged me to marry him, because I, too, had loved his wife—because I, too—and I alone of all the world—had known her and cared for her as he himself—I accepted his offer humbly and gratefully. I think I had some thought that our life together would be a service of perpetual memorial to Corinna; and I had not one jealous qualm in thinking so! That I only, of all the world, understood him, understood what he had possessed, and what he had lost, that I only, with this understanding, could make his life comfortable and peaceful—this seemed to me enough of joy.

Dad tried to prevent it. It is a curious thing that while we young people are seeking wisdom, and, in our own opinion, finding it in all sorts of difficult and out-of-the-way places, our parents acquire it in the humdrum walks of every day. I never thought

of my father as a particularly wise man, and, of course, when he told me that Gerard could never make me happy, when he begged me to remember that he had not made Corinna happy, I thought him more than usually purblind. I think I told him that he did not understand—poor father! He shook his head sadly at me, and said he feared it was I who did not understand.

I know now what he meant when he told me that, whereas my sister had been a vain, selfish woman, her husband was a worse thing yet, a man eaten by self-consciousness and egotism. I know what he meant when he said that Gerard's grief was an unconscious pose, was his own tribute to his own idea of himself as a man who had had the experience of a great love, and as a man who had the constancy to maintain it after separation from its object. But, then, alas! I did not see what he meant, and I insisted upon having my own way, and by and by Gerard and I were quietly married, and my old father gave me away, with a face more drawn and gray than I had ever seen him wear before.

If I had had daughters I should have taught them from childhood the uselessness and folly of self-sacrifice. Religion and philosophy to the contrary notwithstanding, I think there is no more futile rule of life for a woman than the one based upon renunciation. In marrying Gerard, I renounced what every girl has a right—has a duty—to expect, the privilege of living with and for the man who loves her for herself. Normal youth is youth seeking its own; there is something morbid in the youth that strives to base life upon some other plan than this.

I paid for my self-sacrifice, I paid for giving up the normal woman's heritage and for devoting myself to a mistaken ideal of ministering to a man's broken heart. I had not been married two months before I began to understand to what misery I had doomed myself, to what perpetually vain effort to bring peace and satisfaction into my husband's life. Slowly there grew upon

me the knowledge that he had never loved Corinna any more than he now loved me; that the one thing he had always loved was his own idea of himself, the one thing for which he demanded continual thought was that. He liked to portray himself as a hero of a great passion, the martyr of a great loss. It was for that reason, and that reason only, that he deluded himself with the thought that he had been happy with Corinna. It was a delusion that became more fixed as the years passed.

There are no words to tell how barren those years were for me. The first one or two were full, however, being filled with my feverish efforts, my feverish anxieties, to be to Gerard all that I had hoped. Gradually, I saw that I could never be that, indeed, that he did not want me to be that. He preferred to be the man upon whom the gods had wrought everlasting woe. That he was able to add to this great woe the minor trouble of dissatisfaction with me enhanced his happiness, such as it was.

After the second year, I gave up the useless task to which I had consecrated myself in my romantic folly. I tried to fill my days with pursuits that would keep me from thinking too much of the utter waste of my life. As I have several times remarked before, I was not stupid—only highly romantic in youth. My native intelligence served me now in giving me worthy occupations for my idle hours.

For a long time after our marriage, Gerard and I had traveled; he had the restlessness of the unsatisfied mind, and the means wherewith to gratify it. When we came back to Washington finally, to settle down, we had talked of going to the place which he and Corinna had built—not as we had talked of it during the few days of our engagement, almost as if it were a temple, but practically. Gerard was disgusted with me because I had ceased to take the temple view of the dwelling, so he gave me to understand that it would be exquisite torment to live with me in the house where he and the

starry Corinna had lived together. I was used by that time to behave with philosophy, and I accepted his decision without even an inward revolt or pang. We hired a house in the heart of the city and lived there for a period.

It was only last year that a new freak made him decide to open up the old house, after all, and live in it. I acquiesced, and without any particular feeling in the matter; we were rich, I had my own car, I could reach the heart of the city for my committee meetings, and my usual pursuits and relaxations, without any discomfort whatever, and I had long since ceased to feel anything, either sorrow or remorse or reverence, for the house where Corinna had lived. We moved out, although Gerard refused to do the remodeling which the house really required.

It was about this time that George Dermott once more appeared upon the scene. Gerard, himself, brought him home to dinner one night; I gathered from what he said later that he had had some hope of finding in Mr. Dermott a still grief-stricken adorer of Corinna, with whom he might hold congenial lamentations. In this he was disappointed. Mr. Dermott recalled Corinna, I have no doubt, but he did not introduce her into the conversation, and he cleverly avoided Gerard's efforts to bring her in. He was an agreeable guest—traveled, cultured, amusing. He became rather a frequent caller at my tea table, Gerard never objecting. Indeed, I think that he hoped for a time to find a cord of unforgotten grief for Corinna in George Dermott's make-up.

Although we had moved out to the old house, Corinna's room had not been opened. Gerard gave me to understand that he, himself, would be the one to open it when he found himself able to bear the sight of it again. As usual, I acquiesced—alas, that I should say it, with complete indifference! But, as a matter of fact, he finally gave me the keys, and asked me to go in and see if all were as she left it.

It was exactly as she had left it.

The papers on the marquetry desk were growing yellow, their ink was fading, the dust was thick upon everything. In spite of the drawn shades, the delicate colors of the hangings had faded. But everything was, practically, as she had left it. When the dust of the years had been removed, Gerard came and looked in it. He closed his eyes after one glance, as though the sight and the memories it stirred in him were unbearable, and he begged me to have it done over at once in some less heart-wringing style.

I cleared out Corinna's old desk. I threw away the unreceipted bills, the cards to all the long-forgotten "openings," the invitations to this and that. There were notes—foolish little notes—from her admirers. These I burned.

But there was a sheaf of letters in one of the drawers which I could not bring myself to destroy; a perusal of a few of them had made me see them as the evidence of poor Corinna's one real experience in life. They were on gray-blue paper, which had not changed its color much with time, and the firm characters, written in black ink, might have been written yesterday. They were undated and signed only with initials; some were guiltless of any beginning; some were playfully addressed to "Your majesty." The envelopes were thrown away, Corinna had gathered the notes themselves and kept them in an inner drawer. I knew the writer well enough; I had come to know the writing from formal little letters I had had from George Dermott.

I do not know why it seemed to me too cruel to destroy at once the sole sign of any reality of joy or sorrow that had ever touched my beautiful sister. But so it did seem to me—I could not bear to do it. I put the notes away in my own desk, to burn some later day.

I mused a good deal over what the notes indicated. They were ardent, for all their playfulness, their graceful lightness, far too ardent for a wife to have received from another man than her husband. At the same time, they

did not indicate absolutely how much of her heart she had given, or how much of his heart she had taken. Had she, poor girl, living with this self-tortured egoist, to whom my own life was bound, had she been granted one real and vital experience, before she passed beyond the bourne? I almost hoped so, so bitter did my own life seem to me.

Yet, miserable as I was, dissatisfied as I was, wasted as I felt all my existence to be, I think I had a greater pity for Gerard even than for myself. I knew that I had, at least, possessed the possibility of living. It was circumstances only which had made my days and my emotions dead. But he had never even had the possibility. His nature, his temperament, forbade him one real experience. The best that life had had to give him, for all his beauty, all his wealth, was that manufactured recollection of an inner communion with Corinna, which he had never really had—a phantom love.

The thing that happened is almost unbelievable to me when I think of it. In the first place, it is difficult for me to conceive how even a man so much the prey of every whim as Gerard could deliberately go through the papers in his wife's desk. In the second place, it is monstrously unbelievable that, finding in a pigeonhole in my desk those old letters sent to Corinna years before—discreet letters, with no beginning, no date, and only an occasional initial for a signature—he should have been so completely blinded as not to realize what they were. But both these possibilities came to pass.

Going to my desk for something, his eyes were struck by the little sheaf of gray-blue notes. He did the unbelievable thing—he opened them and read them. And then, more monstrous still, he believed that they were sent to me; in fact, were part of a correspondence I was having with a lover!

I am glad now that I was so dazed when first he made his stormy accusation that I could utter no reply. If I had been able to speak then, I should, of course, have denied everything, and

I cannot help thinking that if I had once framed a denial in words, he must have believed me. But I stood staring at him, open-eyed, open-mouthed, and dumb.

When he had stormed out of the room, leaving me still there, paralyzed with amazement, there slowly dawned upon me a notion—I shall never know whether it was a gleam of hope at the prospect of some relief, however painfully won, or whether it was the last spurt of the flame of my old protective tenderness for Gerard, or the last flicker of my old adoring love for Corinna. He believed me guilty of unfaithfulness. He had deluded himself for years with the fancy of Corinna's perfections and the perfect life that they had had together. Why deceive him? Why not let him keep his dream? Why not accept, myself, the release, together with the ignominy, that his delusion would give me?

Our separation was a nine days' wonder. He bruited his wrongs abroad; I was silent. My father, wise old man, needed no word to justify me; some of my friends believed in me; all expressed a polite incredulity of harm on my part. But Gerard won his uncontested suit against me—on some less hideous ground than he might have used.

The house that he and Corinna built is shut again, and silent. Again its owner scours the earth's surface in search of the happiness he can never find. At last I have, if not peace, freedom to strive for peace.

No one has ever understood—no one but George Dermott. A while ago he and Gerard met, in Egypt, it seems. And when George Dermott, unaware of what had happened, spoke to Gerard, he, the ungovernable, insulted him, and in the insult gave a clue to the true situation.

George Dermott, himself, has just told me so. He thinks he understands why I was silent. He thinks I was too all-tender to deprive my husband of his saint, too loyal to stain my sister's memory. But I—I do not know.

A STARRY NIGHT FOR A RAMBLE



By
HOLMAN F. DAY

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

(This story, complete in itself, is a sequel of "Prince Wujoud and the 'Et Cetera's.'" Prince Wujoud and his associates of a hand-to-mouth traveling troupe, including a big snake, two trained apes, and some porcupines, were committed to Sheriff Aaron Sproul's jail at the same time that Hiram Look, the old showman, was imprisoned for contempt of court; he had talked back to the presiding judge before whom he appeared as plaintiff in an action against a neighbor whose crowing roosters had annoyed him. Apes, snake, et cetera, escaped, to the terror of Newry Village, and Cap'n Sproul, unable to capture them, violently cast out of the jail, under cover of the night, Prince Wujoud and his fellows with instructions to bring back their animals or take the consequences as "escaped prisoners." The "prince" and the others were anxious to remain in jail, because they were committed as witnesses and were drawing witnesses' per diem fees during incarceration. During the excitement of ejecting the prisoners, Hiram Look, angered by treatment he had received from his old friend and jailer, escaped into the night.)

THAT message clattered with staccato that gave promise of excitement. It came into the Scotaze telegraph office in mid-afternoon. It was addressed to Follansbee Sprague, by vocation village blacksmith, by avocation secretary of the Scotaze Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association.

The message ran:

F. SPRAGUE, Scotaze. Announce outrage worse than Russia. Am in jail. Sent there for freedom of speech, natural birthright American citizen. All in plot against me, adopt resolutions as body, and telegraph same to President United States. Start protest movement to sweep country.

(Signed) H. Look,
Foreman Scotaze Ancients and Honorables.

A call of that sort from a foreman who had paid the bills of a monthly

banquet for two years deserved only one kind of obedience—prompt and unquestioning. Mr. Sprague had received that message at his forge. The messenger read it to him.

Mr. Sprague did not stop to drop a hot horsehoe that he held with some pincers. He started on the run across the street to the Methodist church, forced the vestibule door, and began to ring an alarm. It had been three years since a fire signal had been sounded in Scotaze, and it found the Ancients scattered but enthusiastic. Men bounced out of stores, workshops, and fields in every direction and started for their several homes on the dead gallop. This was unquestioning obedience to the first rule; an Ancient, on penalty of fine of fifty cents to be applied to banquet ac-

count, must never appear at a fire without his fireman's hat, two leather buckets, a bed wrench, and his bag with a puckering string. This wild scattering of the forces was evolution number one; in evolution number two they came tumbling to one common centre, the little building that housed tub "Hecla Number One."

Mr. Sprague could estimate fairly well the time required for mobilization. He rang for ten minutes! He held the yellow paper of the message gripped between his teeth.

Then he began to wonder why the Ancients had not come bursting in on him to find out the reason for the alarm. Mr. Sprague was a man who attended to one thing at a time, and attended to that exclusively. In obeying the orders of his superior it had not occurred to him—being so well informed himself—that others might mistake a most natural rallying call for the Ancients as an alarm of fire. When he stepped outside he saw Buel Dustin come charging down the street, astride one of his white truck horses, and leading its mate.

"We don't need Hecla," yelled Mr. Sprague, running into the middle of the street and throwing up his arms. "Stop here! We don't need the tub, I say!"

But Dustin kept on past, belaboring his horse with the end of a rein.

"Never heard of a fire that you didn't need to squirt on," he shouted back over his shoulder.

Mr. Sprague's explanation that there wasn't any fire was howled impotently into a cloud of dust.

"Ain't any fire!" echoed one of a crowd of villagers now assembling at the church. "If there ain't any fire, what ye been ringin' Methody bell for?"

"It ain't none of the public's business," replied Mr. Sprague, with official stiffness, "not till the Scotaze Ancients has been duly and regularly notified first."

He folded the telegram and clutched it in his big fist. In the face of their

indignant protest he maintained his haughty reticence.

"Because you've won a few prize squirts and can flim-flam Hime Look into settin' up a feed for you once a month, it don't give you a license to run this whole town," objected the spokesman for the mob.

Mr. Sprague did not unbend sufficiently to reply. He started away down the street toward the station of Hecla One. He met them coming. Dustin's horses were in the van, hitched to the end of the long tow-rope to which fifty men were clinging. The horses galloped, and yanked along the men and the tub. Again Mr. Sprague tried to stop the impetuous Dustin and again he failed. Mr. Dustin was yelling "Fire!" and belaboring his team. There was nothing for the secretary to do but to grab in and go along with the organization. He figured that Dustin, having secured Hecla, would stop at the meeting house for directions. Dustin did.

Sprague leaped to the meeting-house steps. He waved his telegram.

"Feller members!" he cried.

"We ain't here for stump speeches," bellowed the impatient Mr. Dustin. "We're here to put out a fire. Where is it?"

"There ain't no fire. I've been tryin' to tell you there ain't. You blastnation old jumpin' flea, settle down and shut up! I've got here——"

"Time for readin' notices and announcements after that fire is put out," insisted Dustin, making ready to start off. "Fiah-h-h! Fiah-h-h!"

"If some gent will kindly knock that old foghorn off'm that hoss and hold a hand over his mouth," snarled Mr. Sprague, "I'd like to explain why I've called you together, Ancients. I rung that bell because desp'rit' cases need desp'rit' remedies. Here's something that's worse than a fire. It's a telegram from our noble chief. Listen and your blood will run cold!"

Even Mr. Dustin hushed then and listened with the others, mouth open, eyes goggling. At the end of the reading they all gasped wordlessly.

"My Gawd!" broke out Lycurgus Snell, first to get his voice. "Chief Look put into jail! It's like hearin' of the President of the United States bein' assassinated!"

"There ain't no time to lose, gents," urged their secretary. "We might as well act right here and now. It don't want to be said that the Ancients and Honer'bles of Scotaze let grass grow under their feet. What is the will and pleasure?"

Mr. Dustin, from point of vantage on his white horse, got in a prompt suggestion. "I move we put ahead our reg'lar banquet one week—have it to-night at the tavern instead of next week, and make speeches and adopt resolutions and et cetry."

Acclaim greeted that proposition. But one meek voice in the crowd demurred.

"It seems kind of cheeky to eat a banquet on a man that's in jail—he payin' the bills, as I suppose you call 'em to have him do."

"It ain't cheeky for that crowd," grumbled the sour spokesman of the villagers, addressing a neighbor. "They'd stop right in the middle of a conflagration to answer a dinner-bell alarm, if some one else was payin' for the dinner."

"That's the way the chief would like to have us do," indorsed the secretary; "have our banquet! He ain't so narrer-contracted as some folks I could name, and that's why he's a chief to foler right into the jaws of hell, if he calls on us to do it. I'll see Fyles of the tavern, and if there's steak and onions and eggs enough in town that banquet will be served at the tavern at six p. m. I'm speakin' for Chief Look

in the way he'd like to have me speak." The ringing cheers that replied left no doubt as to the sentiment of Hiram Look's loyal followers.

"There'll be somebody sorry they ever jammed Chief Look into jail," prophesied Lycurgus Snell dismally.

Some one lifted the battle song of Hecla One. The fifty men seized the tow-rope of the tub and swung away down the street roaring the chorus:

"Oh-h-h, here wee-cum from
old Sco-taz-e,
With Hecky One, and she's a
daisy.
Rip, squirt, YIP, and a whoop
and a holler—
We'll lick hell for a half a dol-
lar!"



He forced the vestibule door, and began to ring an alarm.

For an hour in the late afternoon, while the fragrance of steak and onions was pouring from the kitchen windows of Scotaze tavern, the Ancients and Honorables fairly lifted the roof of the old hostelry with the iteration and reiteration of that chorus. Envious outsiders who heard the growing gusto of the carolers hinted that a barrel of hard cider was horsed up somewhere on the tavern premises. But no outsider dared to investigate. The Ancients

sounded dangerous. In fact, even those without could distinguish a note of truculence in the intonation of the battle song after a time.

The note did not belie the spirit of the meeting. The resolutions were drafted and presented by Ezra Totman Ring, who had in the past won local reputation as an able orator of the catch-as-catch-can type in town-meeting debate. Resolutions denounced in seven sections, and every time Mr. Ring shrieked those rotund syllables, "We de-

nounce!" his auditors stood on chairs and yelled defiance to law that could be so perverted as to put in jail a man of the prominence and public spirit of Hiram Look.

"Public spirit!" cried Mr. Ring. "Where is there another man who would keep on givin' reg'lar banquets like this to us, even after he'd moved away down to the shire—bein' our noble chief still?"

The convocation could think of no one, and so declared in chorus.

"And what did he go for?" demanded Orator Ring. "He went to put into high office and to be with and advise and help a man that has now turned traitor to him—a man that has grabbed him with savage joy and rammed him into a dungeon cell."

Hisses and groans for Sheriff Sproul.

"That telegram tells the story and we can read between the lines," the orator went on. "There he is, our chief, sobbin' out the sorrow of a broken heart in a prison cell—deserted by his best friend, or so he has claimed to be, stomped on by a judge that ain't got no bowels of compassion. He don't ask for help in that telegram. He didn't have to, and he knew it. He knew that the Ancients would rally. It has been twitted against us in this town that all we're good for is to go to musters and eat banquets. But we can show 'em that when duty calls us we are there!"

"I move we hire a brass band," broke in Mr. Dustin, "and march up to the State House and ask the governor for a pardon for our chief!"

But before any one could second that conservative motion, Mr. Ring blazed forth into the climax that he was aiming at.

"What be ye, a rabbit?" he sneered—a sneer in crescendo like the shriek of a siren. "Be ye all rabbits? Listen to me, and don't no one else break in with any more speaks of that sort. Once before in hist'ry has dungeon walls raised their heads to threaten the rights of the plain people. Them dungeon walls was the Bastille. And the people rose in their might. And now that a Bastille has rose up in this county, if

ye don't hear your call to duty then you're rabbits. And what's that call?"

They stared at him, comprehension dawning on their faces.

"It's to show Chief Look that he ain't left alone without friends," roared Orator Ring. "It ain't to go somewhere and ask *favours*! It's to go to the main headquarters of the trouble and demand *rights*! And I call on ye now and here, to follow me. I call on ye to gird your loins and go to where our chief is in the hands of his enemies. And if they don't dash them fetters from his limbs and open them doors and give him back to us, let's tear that damn Bastille, stone from stone, from cupoly down to foundation; let's use the rocks to chase that judge out of the county with; let's make them iron bars into a griddle and build a bon-fire of law books and barbecue Aaron Sproul until he'll regret the moment he went back on his friend, Chief Look, of the Scotaze Ancient and Honor'ble Firemen's Association!"

Some one started in lusty voice:

"Here we-cum from old Scotaze."

The next moment every one was singing the battle song, using it as whip and spur to courage. In the tumult some one moved that a special train be hired, adding that under the circumstances and considering the errand, Chief Look would probably be mighty glad to settle the bill. In the face of that amazing project no one dared to stop and think. While some kept singing over and over that threat to chastise Tophet for a small consideration, others were busy with the telephone. It was found that a switch engine and caboose would convey them to Newry, the shire town, and in half an hour the intrepid volunteers were on their way. Each man wore full panoply of an Ancient, and even carried his leather buckets and his puckering string bag. It was to be no informal affair; they proposed to meet their chief with the honors of complete regalia.

When they disembarked at Newry, a few of the more apprehensive members suggested that they'd better sneak



"And now that a Bastille has rose up in this county, if ye don't hear your call to duty, then you're rabbits."

cautiously up to the jail by back streets and parley with the stern jailer. But the majority were in no mood to listen to any such unobtrusive tactics. They were out for parade and wanted the world to know it.

"Sneak up and have a back-door talk in whispers with Tyrant Sproul?" demanded their orator. "Think we're goin' to waste a banquet and a special train in that way? Let's have him hear us comin'. Get them drums and fifes goin'!"

When the music burst on the night, even the weak-kneed ones perked up.

They took the middle of the main street of the shire town. The drums

banged and the fifes squealed. And all Newry within hearing awoke and wondered who these were who had come from Scotaze prepared to take such an extensive contract for half a dollar.

Sheriff Sproul, just falling asleep after a busy and aggravating evening, did not wonder when he heard the rataplans of the drums and that familiar song. For a brief, tempestuous, and unsatisfactory period he had been chief of the Scotaze Ancients, himself; and understood somewhat the nature of the members. It was plain to him why they had come. They were down to serenade Hiram Look, and at that the

cap'n sleepily did wonder. Not because it showed lack of good taste—a serenade to a man in jail. Cap'n Sproul had long before made up his mind that the Scotaze Ancients always did everything wong end to. But why the cap'n wondered was because the Ancients had come all the way down to visit a man who could not invite them in to have something to eat. The cap'n, after his brief experience with them, had formed this derogatory opinion of their loyalty.

He allowed them to rattle their drums and roar their song in front of the jail for a long time without bothering to protest or to appear. The fact that Hiram Look had broken out of jail and was at large somewhere, and probably was miles away from the sound of their complimentary demonstration solaced the sheriff, keeping vigil amidst the uproar in the sanctity of his chamber. And then it occurred to him that the joke on his old neighbors of Scotaze was not complete until he had shared his secret with them.

By the time he got down the stairs to the jail office the crowd outside had indicated that it was not wholly in a musical and complimentary mood. The turnkey was apprehensive. They were yelling threats and insults in which the sheriff's name was employed in unmistakable fashion; persons were battering at the door with clubs, and some one had thrown a rock through the window. That was carrying a serenade a bit too far. Cap'n Sproul was not dismayed. He knew his crowd, he thought. He was contemptuously angry. Giving orders to the turnkey to bar the door behind him and open only on his orders from without, the sheriff buttoned his coat and stepped out. They knew him in the starlight, and yelled derisively.

"There's the Judas!" screamed Orator Ring. "Where's that noble friend you're prosecutin'?"

The sheriff was obliged to wait until the Ancients had once more declared what they were willing to do for half a dollar.

"What do you mean?" he managed

to ask them at last. "What do you mean by comin' down here, full of howls and hard cider, and draggin' the name of your town in the mud and mire?"

"We mean we're goin' to have our chief out of this jail in the next ten minutes, if we have to smash it open like a rotten punkin shell," announced Mr. Ring.

"Well," said the cap'n serenely, delivering, as he supposed, a crushing blow, "you can disband as a jail-breakin' mob and reorganize as a rescue and huntin' posse. Your chief broke out of this jail about two hours ago, and if he's still runnin' the way he started out, he must be someways off."

"You're a liar," stated Orator Ring defiantly, "and if you think fifty growed men can be fooled by any such bobble-whoop as that, you're pickin' us up for infants in the cradle. You hand out Mr. Look or down comes your jail!"

Cap'n Sproul felt that this insulting disbelief was taking the edge off his joke. He forgot his ire in his anxiety to convince them.

"I'll bet you a thousand dollars he ain't in here, and I'll let in three of you to look around and prove it!"

"Open your door, then," advised Mr. Ring. "Seein' is believin', and after what's been happenin' in this county we ain't believin' anything that we don't see."

"And after you see 'em, it's hard work to believe some things," said a man in the crowd. "A man's best friend turnin' against him and lockin' him up, for instance!"

Fifty men that pressed closely around him on the stone steps groaned and hissed until the sheriff's head rang. Cap'n Sproul, remembering all his desperate efforts, at the risk of his own standing as an officer of the law, to keep Hiram Look from going to jail, was stung by that injustice.

"So that's it, hey?" he inquired grimly. "Well, you all go to that place you was singin' about lickin', and attend to the business that's waitin' for you there. You can take my word, or you can let it go. But you can't come

into this jail. Not now, after them twits."

Then he essayed quick retreat.

They rushed him just as he yelled: "Open the door!" And the turnkey obeyed so willingly that he threw the portal wide open without its protecting chain. The sheriff had not calculated upon such promptness on both sides. He went along in the van of the rush, buffeted on all sides, and the fifty zealots of the Ancients packed the office before he could take breath. Even his mighty wrath could not avail in that extremity. The deputy surrendered his keys to those who ransacked his person, and with bedlam in eruption they went through the establishment, howling their song, shouting the name of their chief, and letting not a corner escape them.

"He ain't here, gents!" Mr. Ring declared at last, standing among them and fanning himself with the flap of his fireman's hat. "But, by the blue blazes, we ain't done yet! If they're mean enough to put a man like Chief Look in jail, they're savage enough to go further. You know where he is," he yelled, wagging his finger under the cap'n's nose. "And, blast ye, we'll make you tell!"

Mobs, in full operation, have manners that make the judicious grieve. And the Scotaze Ancients had never forgotten the fact that Cap'n Sproul had resigned his brief foremanship of the organization with the violently expressed opinion that they were nothing but a crowd of ever-eating grasshoppers, who couldn't put out a fire in a cook stove.

The ancient resentment flickered into flame there and then. The cap'n succeeded in knocking down the first two who tackled him, but numbers overcame him. They got him down and sat on him.

"It ain't any use tryin' to make him tell," said Mr. Ring, after an ineffective line of questions had been addressed to the raging captive. "He always was stubborn'n a sculpin. But fetch him along and follow me."

"Where to?" was the chorus.

"It's a starry night for a ramble," quoth Mr. Ring. "We're in it now for a shote. Let's go the whole hog. There's the judge that put Chief Look in here. We'll warble that little ditty under his window! If this village wants any sleep to-night they'll tell us where our chief is."

Numbers lend confidence and inspire recklessness, even when a judge of the supreme court is in question. Away went the mob, dragging the infuriated sheriff.

The fifes had resumed, the drums were busy once more, and the Ancients were announcing all over again their willingness to wallop Sheol for a minor consideration. Then something astonishing happened. They were marching on the sidewalk under the shadow of the courthouse trees. Two great, furry objects suddenly dropped from the covert of the branches. They landed upon the shoulders of the two men nearest in the press. The Ancients were closely massed for mutual encouragement and protection. The new arrivals, as though excited and attracted by this new tumult, began to bound here and there over the heads and shoulders of the crowd, scratching, squealing, and clawing. Cap'n Sproul was the only one who understood. They were the escaped apes. The nerves of the rural gentlemen, from up the line were well on edge, anyway. This perfectly astounding visitation was not explainable by any knowledge they possessed regarding the fauna of Cuxabexis County.

"They're the wild men of Borneo," howled a man from whose head an ape had just ripped his fireman's hat. And they stampeded, the sheriff in the midst of the press.

The men who held him did not release his arms. But they let go shortly, as though a galvanic shock had paralyzed them. Revealed to all of them, directly in their path as they ran, hanging from the irons of a store awning and lighted effectually by a street lamp, swung a gigantic serpent, regarding them with interest as they bore back away from him.



"Our chief!" roared Orator Ring, holding the lamp high.

"Where be we, Afriky or Newry?" gasped the horrified Mr. Dustin.

The sheriff escaped from them then. He strode back toward the jail, with no hand to hinder his retreat. Those who were not wholly absorbed by the spectacle of the snake, were looking into the air expecting a second descent of the strange, furry creatures.

At the foot of the jail steps the sheriff found a dark figure looming. He drew off to strike, believing that one of his late assailants had remained on guard. But it was Hiram Look.

"What's the hoorah down there, Aaron?" asked that gentleman humbly and anxiously. "I've been hangin' off to one edge because I didn't want any one to spot me comin' back."

"Who be they?" snarled the cap'n.

"Who be they? Don't you recognize the fodder-chawin', behellity-brained dregs of a scuttle-butt that you've been trainin' up to eat steak and onions once a month and be a disgrace to a civilized country?"

"I thought I recognized what they was singin'," faltered his friend, "but I couldn't figger that the Scotaze Ancients was down here. I reckoned some one had stole their tune."

"There ain't nobody low enough to steal nothin' from them diggers," retorted the sheriff. "They're your'n. Go down and mess in with 'em. You'll feel to home."

"No, Aaron," protested Hiram, still humble. "I ain't encouragin' anything of that kind, whatever it is they're up to. It's none of my doin's, if they're down here. I ain't naturally a lawbreaker; you know that! But persecution got me rattled. I've had a chance to think the thing over."

"And you've changed your mind again, hey?" demanded the sheriff. "Now, look-a-

here! You rammed yourself into this jail, in spite of all I could do, and then you rammed yourself out. You've had it your own way twice. Now I'm goin' to have it my way. You stay out."

"But it's goin' to put me in a bad hole—bustin' out of jail," protested Hiram. "I've been thinkin' it all over. I don't want to be placarded as an escaped prisoner. Now, be a friend! Put me back into jail, and—"

"Let you keep on playin' martyr, eh? More profit and general satisfaction and more heiferin' up of this county by your playin' martyr, hey, than by bangin' around in the woods playin' outlaw? Now I'm goin' to show you up. Friendship stops. You stay out."

Hiram's humility vanished. "Who

do you think you be, Lord Argyle, of the Barb'ry Isle? Standin' there, high sheriff of this county, and bound by oath to put prisoners in jail and keep 'em there, and tellin' me that I can't go back and take my rightful place in my prison cell? You hain't lost your mind, have ye?"

"No, nor my muscle. You try to bust back into this jail, while I'm runnin' it, and I'll heave you over Rineses' block. When you do come back, you'll come as I say, and as the court says, your nose in the dirt, and disgrace plastered all over you! You've been hanterin' for trouble—and now you'll get a hearty meal of it."

At the moment of that fair stand-off odds intervened.

The Ancients had decided that the course toward the tavern and the judge was beset by too many astounding varieties of natural history. And as the gloom of the opposite route of retreat was ominous they stole the nearest oil street lamp, and came trooping back past the jail. They came with such enthusiasm of flight that neither Hiram or the sheriff had time to dodge outside the radiance of the lantern.

"Our chief!" roared Orator Ring, holding the lamp high and disclosing their quest in the centre of the spotlight.

Stentor, himself, even with a megaphone, could not have made himself heard above the tumult that followed. Fifes, drum, and voices made the night hideous. And Hiram, with flourishing arms and foam-flecked lips, was addressing them. They did not trouble to listen. Their enthusiasm was too great. Besides, they felt that they knew exactly what he was saying. He must be exhorting them to avenge his wrongs. Every one knows that admirers desiring to show admiration, and avengers desiring to avenge, must bear the beloved object away on their shoulders. Hiram promptly discovered their intent, and fought like a maniac, finding that not one word of his protest could be heard in that bedlam. They hoisted him up, a half dozen of them, and started away. It was a veritable

madman's face that the cap'n caught a final glimpse of as the lantern light flickered on it. And the sight of its fury afforded the cap'n quiet comfort that did much to soothe his spirits, after his own experience.

"Ancients and Honor'bles!" he sneered, left alone, unnoticed in the tumult. "It's tough enough to be one of their enemies that they're after. But Gawd save me from bein' a friend!"

The chorus of "Here wec-cum from old Sco-taz-e" died away in the distance, but the cap'n waited until even the pulse of the throbbing drum faltered and was still.

"There," he sighed, in content, "I reckon they're luggin' him so far that he won't get back to come bangin' 'round this jail again to-night. Let him show up to-morrow, and be exposed and stand his disgrace! He needs a lesson to tone him down. Cuss the circus business, anyway! It has to have a plug hat to go with it, and a man's head usually swells to fit the hat."

His meditations were interrupted as he was about to go up the jail steps. The village constable who interrupted them had evidently waited until the mysterious and uproarious mob was safely out of the way.

"Judge wants you," he panted. "He's been telefoamin' to the jail office, but they said you was out. He's settin' there, in his tavern room, most fussed-up man I ever see. Say, Mr. Sheriff, what's it all about, anyway? It's got this whole village all wowed up, followin' on them g'rillas and that snake. You——"

The constable was chasing at the heels of the sheriff. Cap'n Sproul was hastening to obey the mandate of his superior. He whirled on the inquisitor. He made a pass at him. The constable dodged and got away into the darkness.

"But you was seen leadin' the parade," he shouted accusingly; "I don't blame ye for bein' ashamed to tell anybody what it was. But the voters of this town will have some questions to ask to-morrow, all right."

Those were maddening taunts under the circumstances, but the cap'n realized that the constable and the public had some right to be mystified and suspicious.

There were no formalities attached to his audience with the judge. That wrathful potentate was "weaving" on slippers in the upper hall of the hotel, resembling a caged panther. He began on the sheriff, in one leap of vociferation, using the teeth and claws of tirade.

The sheriff marched up to him, and broke in with a vigor that won attention.

"I'm willin' to take blame, your honor, for what I've done to be blamed for. But when it comes to the An-

cient and Honor'ble Firemen's Association of Scotaze, I don't assume no liability or take no blame, not more than a sea captain does when his vessel is wrecked by act of God. Them Ancients ain't no act of God—I ain't claimin' that; they're act of Satan. And when they swooped down on that jail and whooped through these streets, I had to let 'em swoop and whoop. I ain't either a militia company or an earthquake. If I'd been either I'd have wiped 'em off'n the face of the earth."

That was sincere protestation, and the judge seemed slightly mollified. But his eyes lighted especially at the forthcoming news that Hiram Look had been freed. He inquired more specifically.

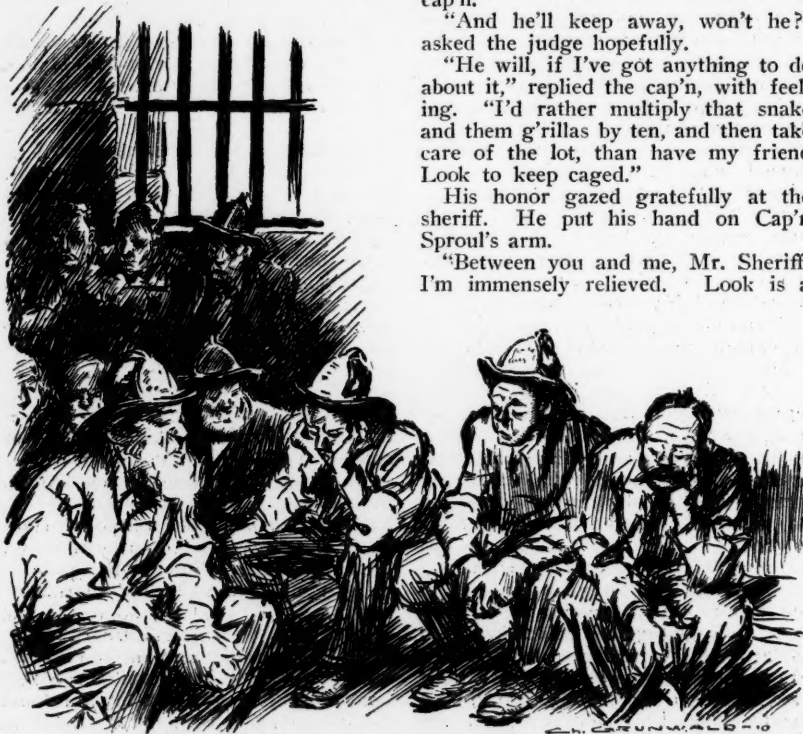
"They lugged him off," stated the cap'n.

"And he'll keep away, won't he?" asked the judge hopefully.

"He will, if I've got anything to do about it," replied the cap'n, with feeling. "I'd rather multiply that snake and them g'rillas by ten, and then take care of the lot, than have my friend Look to keep caged."

His honor gazed gratefully at the sheriff. He put his hand on Cap'n Sproul's arm.

"Between you and me, Mr. Sheriff, I'm immensely relieved. Look is a



They had nothing except their bare hands to oppose to bars and stone walls.

stubborn fellow. I should have had trouble with him. These cases of contempt of court grow often to be very disagreeable for all concerned. I may have been a little hasty, myself. With Mr. Look at liberty you can make a pretense of hunting, but, really, the matter can be left to die out. I commend your course, Mr. Sheriff, and I trust you will excuse anything I may have said to-day. I've been much stirred up."

"So've I," said Cap'n Sproul, accepting the olive leaf. "Runnin' a jail ain't like leadin' a Bible class. You take them fly-by-night critters and animals that was loaded in onto me to-day, and they——"

They appeared then to answer for themselves. The hotel was lighted, and the constable had informed them that the judge was holding vigil and conducting impromptu court regarding the mixed matters of the Cuxabexis jail management.

Smoke-colored Prince Wujoud led the company into the hall. He had recovered his snake. African Anna followed with her apes. They seemed sleepy and sated with excitement, and ready to quit and be good. Aruna Vitum, apparently, had not been as successful in gathering in his porcupines. He came in sullenly with the Comical Newts and Mysterious Siperelle.

"Runnin' a jail," the sheriff started to explain, but his honor was indignant again.

"Mr. Sheriff," he rasped, "I shall agree with you that your jail is running. And it is the swiftest-running place I've ever seen of the kind. Now, will you explain how these seven committed prisoners happen to be wandering around this town this time of night?"

"And the worst part of it is, judge," averred African Anna, undeterred in the presence of the majesty of the law, "we ain't getting a square deal after we've done our end of the thing. He threw us out, and, now that we've caught the animals, as we agreed, they won't let us back into the jail again. We've just come from there."

"What is this, comic opera as well as a museum show?" inquired the judge. "Mr. Sheriff, I'm amazed. I'm astounded. I never heard anything like it!"

"It's all brand-new to me, too," returned Cap'n Sproul doggedly. "Monkeys, snake, fly-by-nights, and the whole caboodle! But I've done the best I knew."

"We'll find out about that in the morning," said the judge, with icy threat in his tones. "But it looks to me as though the governor would be called upon to appoint a new sheriff in this county. *Some* things can be excused." He cast meaning stare at the sheriff. "Other things cannot."

Cap'n Sproul had found that grasping the situation by the horns had worked well once that night. He became bold once more.

"Look-a-here, judge! You gave off your orders to me a few hours ago to have them pestiferous animals captured that was runnin' around this village, seekin' whom they could devour. Your memory, mebbe, ain't so long as mine is, but you told me to go ahead and use any means. And I went ahead—accordin' to your orders." The judge glared denial of that statement. "And *any* means' meant that them that could best catch 'em should be the ones to catch 'em. And them's the ones that owned 'em and knowed their natures. I ain't any snake charmer nor big-game hunter. And they've been caught, ain't they?"

The big snake was wrapped about its owner's waist, and leered contentedly. The apes were dozing at Anna's side. The sheriff went close to the judge.

"Your honor," he whispered confidentially, "you was hintin' a minit ago that you didn't do everything, yourself, just accordin' to the best rules of Hoyle. You stand behind me in this menagerie business, and I'll stand behind you regardin' that ring-tailed tiger that's still loose, along with them Scottaz Ancient's of his. Do you know what he really intends to do, if he can shake them rescuers? He intends to

bust back into that jail, so as to put you just as far into the hole as he can. It's come to him that he can bother you and me worse by bein' in jail than by breakin' out."

His honor reflected, rubbing his nose and hesitating between two very evident evils. And upon the conclave the panting turnkey came bursting.

"I resign," he shouted. "This whole damn county has gone insane. G'rillas, snakes, Hiram Looks, mobs, and firemen's associations, first bustin' in and then bustin' out! I resign. I've left 'em up there. They're runnin' it. Let 'em run it. Let who will, after this, take holt and run it. I resign!"

"As soon as you get all that kind of cable run out, and swing to kedge," observed the cap'n dryly, "suppose you tell us what the matter is with you, anyway?"

But the news the man brought did not astonish him. He anticipated the message in his gloomy thoughts. He judged from the nature of Hiram's departure, and decided that his friend had returned.

"Them fife-and-drum lunatics have come back and busted open the jail door with a batterin'-ram, and put Mr. Look back into jail again, and he seems to be orderin' 'em to do it," stated the turnkey.

The judge and the sheriff exchanged pregnant glances.

"These critters' mouths can be kept shut with three square meals a day whilst they're drawin' witness fees," observed the cap'n, once more confidential. "As for them *other* mouths, you leave it to me."

"I will," said his honor.

"You take them prisoners," the sheriff directed the turnkey, disregarding that gentleman's resignation, "march 'em back to the jail, and put 'em where they belong—and take advice from 'em how to lock up them g'rillas and that snake. And keep in that end of the jail, 'tendin' to your business, till I call for you. I'll look after things in the other end, myself!"

The sheriff found the outside door of the jail office badly battered. The

jail office was empty, but a hullabaloo of voices indicated that the mob was in the jail proper. They had secured the deputy's keys and had gained admittance through the iron door.

Orator Ring promptly spied the sheriff when he came in and stood above them on the iron stairway. And the orator spoke for the crowd, after the yell of defiance and derision had died away.

"Our chief is in a prouder place than if he was on the throne of the Injies," he shrieked, shaking his fist at the cell in which Hiram had reestablished himself. "We know how it is, now, and we're behind him. Them shackles of his ought to be set with di'monds. For he's standin' for the rights of man, and he will bring down the heads of the mighty in shame. And we serve notice on you that he's goin' to stay here till he gets ready to leave."

"You needn't holler so loud about it," said the sheriff calmly, "for there ain't any chance for dispute with me about his stayin' in jail. He belongs in jail. And so there wasn't any need of servin' that notice. But whilst we're on the notice business, I've got a little one of my own to hand out. And that is, bein' as how you're a mob, makin' a riot in the street and undertakin' jail delivery, and have kindly arrested yourselves, you'll all stay here till I"—he patted his breast—"get ready to have you leave!"

A mob—having many minds—heaves prudence to the winds. No one had anticipated the possibility that the sheriff so promptly grasped. Before the first of the panic-stricken crowd had got halfway up the stairs, he was out, and had the big door locked and bolted. Breaking out of a jail, even for a mob, is a different proposition from breaking in. They had nothing except their bare hands to oppose to bars and stone walls.

Before daylight their courage had gone, their zeal had evaporated. Men remembered anxious families at home and duties waiting on the morrow. They despondently canvassed the probable penalties for such offenses as they

had committed. Those offenses loomed more largely than they did when the Ancients were skylarking to the tune of "Here wec-cum from old Scotaze," behind a fife-and-drum corps.

They shouted and pleaded for a conference for a long time ere the sheriff consented to appear. When he did come, he was chewing a toothpick contentedly, following a hearty breakfast, the want of which the broken-spirited Scotaze contingent was beginning to feel acutely. He held a revolver in each hand.

"There ain't no more foolin' to this proposition, gents," he informed them. "I'm sheriff of this county, and you are prisoners, and you try any rush on me and there'll be some hurry-up orders for coffins go out of Scotaze."

But they were too dispirited even to shout at him. He perceived it, and went on.

"I know what you want—you want to beg off and go home. Now, I ain't goin' to compliment by sayin' that this county wants you. It only wants to keep real criminals locked up. You ain't got spirit enough to be criminals, except when you're full of hard cider and steak and onions. You ain't worth keepin' and feedin'. So I'm goin' to take this thing on myself to settle. I'm goin' to let you go home." He promptly and contemptuously checked the murmur of applause that started. "It's on the idee that if a rat will run you don't want to get in the way of his runnin'. But, before you go, these things has got to be done. Mark 'em well. A man has got to come up and tuck two hundred dollars through the wicket of this iron

door to pay for damages to property. There has got to be passed out a written apology from Hiram Look to the judge of the supreme court now settin' here, along with fifty dollars' fine for contempt of court. You are to leave them fifes and that drum behind, and agree to sneak down to that special train of your'n and get out of this

town as quick as the lord of fools will let you, takin' your noble chief along. That last is a compromise that I'm makin'; I'm savin' him from goin' into court and apologizin' in public, and he's savin' me from bein' ashamed any more for a friend that's misguided. We'll let it stand right there. I'll give you fifteen minutes."

Orator Ring so hastened matters that the specifications were fulfilled far inside the time limit. The turnkey carried in Hiram's clothes and his plug hat—substitutes for the jail uniform he had insisted on at time of commitment—and the chief of the Ancients brought up the rear of the parade that filed past the grim cap'n, posted beside the outside door.

"Hiram," suggested the cap'n, halting his friend, "I'm advisin'

you to stay upcountry till this term of court is over, and, if you feel your bile risin', remember that I've begged you off with the judge and run chances that's pretty despr'it' for a sheriff of a county, in order to hush this thing up."

The others were out of the door. The cap'n slipped the written apology into Hiram's hand. The fifty dollars were folded in it.

"I begged you off with the judge," he whispered, "but I didn't want them



"A man has got to come up and tuck two hundred dollars through the wicket of this iron door."

Piutes of your'n to know it. I'm givin' you your money. A man with that bunch of forty-year locusts to feed once a month can't afford to pay court fines. I don't suppose you're willin' to take any advice, be ye?"

"Well, I've found you a friend in a good many ways," admitted Hiram, fondling the money.

"When you get back to Scotaze, you teach them red-backed caterpillars a new song that don't brag about bein' able to lick Tophet, and then you resign. And after that you and me can be better friends!"

"They've got so they ain't no credit

to me," agreed Hiram. "I'm goin' to resign!"

The sheriff gave a quick look outside. The Ancients were sneaking down a back street. Cap'n Sproul slammed the outside door, took Hiram by the arm, and led him into the private office.

"Write it out, and mail it," he said. "You stay here sub rosy with me. I need your advice what to do with them g'rillas and that snake."

And so the chief of the Ancients hung up his plug hat on the accustomed hook, and made ready for breakfast.



A June Memory

THERE was a young moon in the west that night,
And a great star that hung above the pine;
The valley was so brimmed with sunset light
That it spilled over like a golden wine,
And trickled through the greening meadow land
Where we walked hand in hand.

A little brook went with us mirthfully,
And there were low, sweet voices in the grass,
As if the pixy people laughed to see
Two lovers in the bridal springtime pass,
And in the dingles where the roses swung
Their lamps the fireflies hung.

Her face was like a star all pale and fair,
Her mouth was like a blossom crimson-bright,
There was a gloss of darkness on her hair,
And in her eyes a shadow and a light,
And in her voice all music ever heard
Trembled and softly stirred.

We walked with love and gladness through the shower
Of purple nightfall in a mood divine,
And in her kiss the essence of that hour
With all its glamour and delight was mine.
Oh, June, what pain and joy you hold for me
In this dear memory!

L. M. MONTGOMERY.

Donna Quixote

By Owen Oliver

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

WHEN Omi comes to meet me at the station, I generally catch a smile as I turn the corner of the stairs. On the evening that I mean she wasn't smiling, and she sighed as she took my arm.

"They're not nice children, Jimmy," she stated.

"That's queer," I commented. "Their father was such a decent chap."

"Was he a particular friend of yours?"

"No. He wasn't a friend, exactly. He was a lot older than I was, and I only knew him in business; but I liked him. I suppose he wrote to me because he couldn't think of any one else."

He had been in St. Petersburg for two years, and now he asked me to find more suitable lodgings for his two children in London, as he was afraid they were not looked after properly.

"I suppose he wants them to grow up nice," Omi remarked, with another sigh.

"Yes," I agreed. "We must try and find some nice people who will take them in; and take to them."

"They won't!" Omi shook her head. "But, if they were kind people, they might pretend to—for a little while." She looked at me, and I whistled softly.

"Donna Quixote!" I said. "It isn't our business; and we don't want any one with us."

"No," she assented. "We're—satisfying—by ourselves."

I squeezed her arm and nodded. Omi



is a very satisfying little wife, anyhow; and, if I am not satisfactory, she thinks I am.

"I thought, if we had them just for a month," she proposed, leaning against my shoulder. "You see, Jimmy, you're big and strong and good at games; and he'd try to imitate you, like boys do; and he'd be all right, then."

"Goose!" I said. "But I dare say you'd do the girl a lot of good."

"Girls aren't so easy to manage as boys. They've no bump of—of hero worship; but I'd try.

I think we might have a good influence together, Jimmy. You see, they quarrel so; and I expect it's because they've always seen people quarrel; and perhaps if they saw that we didn't quarrel—— They've no mother, Jimmy."

"All right, Donna Quixote," I said. "You shall have your windmill to tilt at!"

So she fetched them the next day. I found them at our house when I got home.

The boy was fifteen; a square, light-haired, obstinate-looking lad. His name was Frank. His character was otherwise. The girl was fourteen. She was pretty, in a sleepy, sulky style; a pert, discontented, little thing, misnamed Grace. Their manners left a good deal to be desired. They wrangled with each other continually; and they looked upon Omi and me with evident suspicion.

They jangled all tea time, and at last

Grace pinched Frank shrewdly as he was lifting his teacup, and he dropped it with a crash. The tea ran over a centrepiece of which Omi was specially fond, and she snatched it up, with a cry. She is childishly attached to her household gods. I muttered under my breath, and the boy looked a bit frightened.

"He couldn't help it," Omi said quickly.

"It was her fault," he declared, jerking his head toward his sister, who was evidently laughing in her sleeve.

"She didn't mean to make you spill the tea," Omi pointed out; "and I dare say it will wash out."

"You can put it on the bill," said the boy, with a sneer.

"My boy," I told him, "there is no bill."

He looked at his sister, and she looked at him, and tossed her head.

"Do you expect us to believe that?" she asked scornfully.

"Yes, Grace," I said. "When you know me better, I expect you to believe anything I say."

They sniggered, and Omi looked really angry. Her tea seemed to choke her as she swallowed it. But she gulped down her annoyance, and spoke pleasantly.

After tea I tried to interest the boy in games, but he only yawned. Omi tried to interest the girl in various things, with no more success. She did not even want to hold the Wonder, or play with him. She did not like babies, she said, because they fidgeted so. She and Frank went on quarreling so much that we put them at opposite sides of the table for dinner; and then they aggravated each other across it, till I remonstrated.

"I suppose you have rows sometimes?" Frank suggested.

"I don't think you'll see Mrs. Grant and me quarrel," I stated.

"Ah!" he retorted. "You're artful, and pretend before people."

I felt like boxing his ears, but Omi laughed.

"Well, Frank," she said, "it's better

to pretend to be nice than to let every one see you're nasty. You try it!"

"I should think you were good at it," he answered.

"Look here, Frank," I told him, "if any one says anything against Mrs. Grant he'll find that I can be really nasty. There won't be any pretense about it."

"Frank meant it as a compliment," Omi interposed. "Didn't you, Frank?"

She smiled a smile that would have won most boys' hearts; but he pushed his plate aside.

"Can I go to bed?" he asked sullenly.

"Yes," I said shortly; and he went. His sister put out her leg as he passed, and nearly tripped him. He turned, as if he would strike her, but I took his arm and led him to the door.

"Don't pretend to be a cad," I whispered in the passage. "You wouldn't hit a girl, of course."

He stamped up the stairs without answering. His sister laughed when I returned.

"Why didn't you thrash him?" she asked.

"I pretend to be a gentleman, Grace," I told her.

She went to bed, also, after dinner; and Omi came and sat beside me, and drew a mournful breath.

"It's difficult to like them," she owned.

"Impossible!" I declared warmly.

"Oh, well!" she said. "We must pretend to. It will make it harder for them to behave badly, if we're always pleasant to them. If only we could get them to pretend to be nice—to make a sort of game of it, you know—they might grow into it. They've no mother, Jimmy; and perhaps they aren't used to kindness, like——"

"Like I am!" I caught hold of her.

"Like we are," she corrected.

Omi was her nicest—and that is very nice!—with the girl, and tried hard to amuse her; and I struggled to find common ground with the boy; but we failed lamentably. They seemed to have learned to mistrust everybody, including each other, and to have no ca-

capacity for enjoying amusement. At the end of a week we had come to look upon them as hopeless. Then one evening Omi took a fancy for drawing. She is very clever at it. She sat at the table, sketching us all, with her head on one side, frowning her smiling frown when she couldn't get us right, and laughing to herself when she could. I sat watching her, with a proprietary smile. I expect you have noticed that I am a bit proud of Omi. Presently, the boy got up and looked over her.

"Do you draw, Grace?" I asked.
 "No," she said. "I'm stupid and—everything nasty. Nobody likes me. *She* doesn't, even." She nodded at Omi. "Only pretends to."

"Well," I said, "you don't even pretend to, you know."

"It's no use pretending with her. She's too sharp."

"Yes," I said. "She is! But she'd like you better for pretending. Now, look here, Grace. Mrs. Grant gives up a lot of things—and gives them up cheerfully—to make you children com-



Grace pinched Frank shrewdly as he was lifting his teacup, and he dropped it with a crash.

"You *can* draw," he said abruptly.
 "I wish I could."

"Do you?" Omi laughed at him over her shoulder. "Perhaps you could." She gave him a sheet of paper and a pencil. "Try, and I'll see if I can help you."

He sat down, and drew eagerly, and she showed him where he went wrong, and explained about perspective and shading. He listened very eagerly, and even thanked her; and they seemed to become good friends all at once. The girl laid down her book, and watched them; and, presently, I saw her wipe her eyes. So I went and sat down beside her.

fortable. Don't you think that it must hurt her rather to find that you don't like her? That you don't even pretend to?"

The child nodded.

"Yes," she admitted. "I'm not good at pretending, but I think I could pretend to like the Wonder. That would please her, wouldn't it?"

"Of course it would," I said.

She nodded again.

"Would it please you?" she inquired wistfully. Somehow, she was always a little more friendly to me than to the others.

"It would please me very much," I told her. "And there's another thing

that would please me; if you would pretend to be nice to your brother."

She pouted, and shook herself.

"I'd rather be nice to you," she said. "Pretend, I mean. No, I don't."

"You *would* be nice to me, if you did what I wish," I pointed out.

"I will, then," she promised slowly.

I told Omi when they had gone, and she clapped her hands.

"How funny!" she said. "I've been telling him much the same thing; and he's going to be very polite to you and pretend to take an interest in games; and now you must make him. He's clever, Jimmy. He is, really."

The next day, when I came home, I found Grace sitting on the floor, playing bricks with the Wonder. She built them up, and he knocked them over, and cried "Down!" Then she pretended to scold him, and he screamed with laughter. I ruffled her hair as I passed, but instead of looking sulky she smiled up at me.

"You don't really want to aggravate me," she said. "You're only pretending."

"Hush!" I cried. "Don't say the word. It's a dead secret!"

Then we both laughed, and the Wonder laughed, too. Any excuse does for him! And I sat down beside them, and Grace pretended to push me over, and the Wonder pretended to beat her, and she pretended to cry, until he kissed her; and then she hugged him. There was no pretense about the hugging!

After dinner, Frank asked me politely to teach him draughts. He was a promising pupil, and grew very interested in our games. Omi showed Grace how to make a woolen ball for the baby, and she seemed really interested, too. Then Frank had another drawing lesson, while I taught Grace to play fox and geese. In the middle of the game the Wonder yelled, and she jumped up and rushed upstairs to him.

"He'd only lost the bottle," she explained when she came down. "I beg your pardon for going without asking, Mr. Grant."

"Why, it was good of you, Gracie!" I said; and Omi turned round, and smiled at her.

"Thank you, dear," she said. "You are growing quite a second mother to baby. And just look how nicely Frank is drawing, Jimmy."

I went and looked, and Grace came, too.

"It is very nice, Frank," she said hesitatingly.

The boy flushed quickly.

"I'd give it to you, if it was any good," he offered awkwardly, "but it isn't."

"I'd like it to put on my mantel-shelf," Grace said. So he gave it to her, and we went back to our game.

"You're pretending very nicely," I whispered.

She didn't say anything till she was going to bed. Then she whispered:

"It isn't pretend about the Wonder," she confessed. And she ran off, with a very red face.

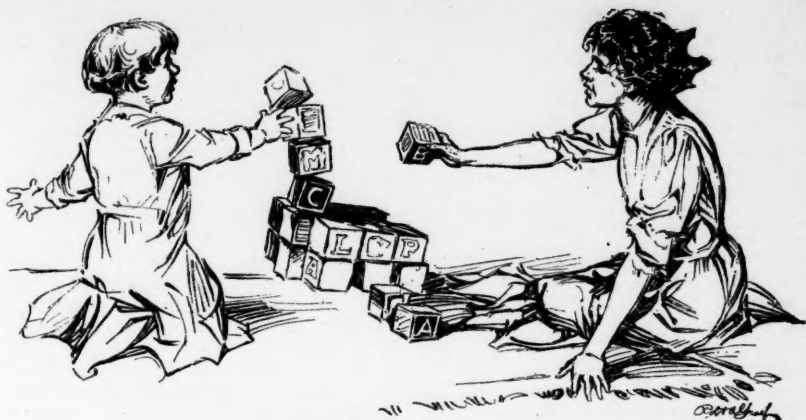
The next day, they both came with Omi to meet me at the station. They had been for a bus ride, and were laughing very much. As soon as we were indoors, they rushed me into the drawing-room to see a drawing that Frank had made of the house, and to hear Grace sing a little song that Omi had taught her. She had quite a good voice, and sang with more taste and feeling than I had thought her capable of; and she nearly learned a second song before dinner, and Frank nearly finished another drawing. Omi and I were going out that evening, and she was fussing about the Wonder, as usual, but Grace intervened.

"He will be quite safe with me, Aunt Omi," she stated, with dignity.

"If there was anything the matter," Frank added, "I would fetch you, and Uncle Jim."

"Oh, thank you, dears!" Omi cried. "Now I shan't worry a bit!"

The boy came and whispered to Omi as she was going out, and Grace whispered to me. On comparing notes, we found that each had promised not to quarrel with the other while we were out.



I found Grace sitting on the floor, playing bricks with the Wonder.

"But what made Frank laugh so?" I asked.

"Why," she said, "I promised that I wouldn't quarrel with you."

The following evening, Omi and Frank and I dressed up and acted. Grace was going to act, too, but the Wonder wouldn't go to sleep, and she elected to nurse him, and be audience. She wouldn't give him up, though he was rather fractious and must have tired her.

"I'm getting very fond of my little 'niece,'" I told her afterward; and the child's eyes filled with tears.

"I don't think any one was ever fond of me before," she said. "Only—I used to pretend that some one was. I called her Winnie; and I wrote about her in a book, like you write stories."

My eyes were moist when I was allowed to read the book the next night. For I saw that Grace's lack of affection was only a pretense, because she had had no one to be fond of. In the same way, Frank had pretended not to care for games, because he had had no one to play with. I bought a football, and played with him down the garden on Saturday afternoon, and he took to it wonderfully. So did Grace, and Omi came and joined in, and played the wildest game of any of us! It was she who kicked the ball through

the scullery window, though Frank made out that he had done it. Omi was going to clear his character, but I put my hand over her mouth.

"The boy's a gentleman," I said. "Accept his chivalry."

I sometimes think that women like Omi do men and boys more good than they know!

I didn't think that Grace overheard; but she came up to me afterward.

"Uncle Jim," she pleaded, "if you break something, will you let me say that I did it?"

"Why, child!" I cried.

"I want Aunt Omi to think I'm a lady," she explained.

I took the child's arm in mine.

"Aunt Omi thinks more of you than that, Gracie," I said. "The other night she spoke to me about a little girl who wanted to act like the rest of us, and nursed a cross little baby instead—"

"But I love the little baby, Uncle Jim."

"Yes, dear; and the little baby loves the little girl; and so does the little girl's Aunt Omi—that was what she said to me. And if the little girl knew what her 'uncle' said about her! Do you know, I believe he thinks a great deal of that little girl?"

"I think she's growing nicer than she used to be, uncle," said Gracie.

She really had grown nice, and so had Frank. Nothing could be more pleasant than their behavior, so far as Omi and I were concerned; but they seemed still to find it difficult to get on with each other. And when we had a letter to say that their father was coming home for a few days, Omi spoke to them about it.

"You know, dears," she said, "I want your father to be very pleased with you; and I am sure he will see a lot of things in you to please him. But there is just one little thing that he might not like. Shall I tell you?"

"Yes, Aunt Omi," Frank said.

"Yes, auntie, dear," said Grace.

"Well, dears, he wouldn't like to think that you weren't fond of each other. You are, of course—oh, yes, you are!—but you pretend you aren't; and he *might* not understand your pretending. For instance, he might not guess that 'great donkey' and 'little stupid' mean 'dear brother' and 'darling sister'!"

"They don't!" Frank stated very promptly.

"No!" said Grace emphatically.

"Well," said Omi, "let's make believe that they do. I expect your father thinks a lot about you while he is away. It must be rather lonely for him, don't you think? And he will be happier if he believes that you are fond of each other. So you must be very friendly while he is here."

"Pretend to, you mean?" Frank inquired.

"Well, that would be something," Omi agreed. "I wish you would."

"Then, of course I will, Aunt Omi," Frank promised.

"And you will, too, won't you, Gracie?" I asked.

"Yes, Uncle Jim," she agreed.

Their courtesy to each other, during their father's visit, was so amusing that Omi and I dared not look at each other; and the first time they said good night before him I had to rush out into the passage to laugh. Omi had made them promise to kiss. They walked within range, like martyrs going to the stake, and turned red, and

poked out their faces, and missed each other! Then they went redder, and made a half hit. Then they bolted off like rabbits. They rubbed their mouths furiously, and made terrible grimaces at each other as they went upstairs.

Their father, however, was delighted, and had no suspicion of pretense.

"It is my greatest consolation to see them so attached to each other," he said over and over again.

We told them, and they pretended more determinedly than ever—they were certainly fond of their father. On his last night, they kissed quite prettily.

"God bless you, my children!" their father said. "I hope I shan't be away from you much longer; but my absence hasn't been an unmixed evil, since it has taught you to hold together, and to love each other. If your mother could see you—" He stopped short, and went over to knock out his pipe.

When we were returning from seeing him off, Grace whimpered a little; and Frank put his arm around her.

"Perhaps he'll get that place in London that he came over about," he consoled her, "and if he doesn't, I'll look after you, you know."

When Grace was going to bed, she kissed Omi and me. Then she hesitated; but at last she walked slowly up to her brother.

"Good night, Frank, dear," she said; and the boy jumped up and put his arm around her and kissed her.

"Good night, old Gracie," he said. "I—I—— That's for dad." And he kissed her again.

He went, too, soon afterward, and Omi and I stood by the mantelshelf.

"Well, Donna Quixote," I said. "You've conquered the windmill. It's a queer thing, but those children have grown really fond of each other."

I laughed; but Omi looked up, and I saw that her eyes were wet.

"If you begin by liking people a little," she said, "it grows big. But when you begin by liking them very much, it grows till—till it almost *frightens* you."

Sometimes I feel like that about Omi.



The Reminiscences of Katie, a Servant Girl

As Told to Anne O'Hagan

III.

POLICEMAN KILGORE INTERVENES

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

I DON'T know why it was, but I got to feelin' awful discontented after I left my three ladies. It's sort of hard bein' a servant girl. You live with people that ain't your own kind, an' no matter how much better a kind they may be, they ain't as comfortable to get along with. You're always in another woman's house; if you don't like it, why, you can't change it. All you can do is to move on. The same way with what is cooked; it isn't your business to express any opinion on the sort of food. You're livin', as intimate as possible, in a place where you have no real belongin' feelin'. There's none of your own blood near you; there's none of your own sort of talk goin' on around you—unless you're workin' in a big house with lots of servants. An' if you are, it's likely that the lot of them will be carryin' tales on you, an' tryin' to get some of their work put off on you.

It's a lonesome sort of life. An', as I say, I got sort of discontented. I was notional, an' shifted my place three times in a month. Mrs. Doran, she argued with me, an' told me that no one who had to work for a livin' was ever goin' to get exactly what she wanted, an' that I'd better make up

my mind to that at once, an' not let myself grow into one of those stop-over-night an' gone-the-next-mornin' girls that every one comes to distrust.

The first place I had gone after leavin' my three ladies was with a lady who was goin' into the country for the summer. She seemed real pleasant in the office, an' the way she described her family, it sounded real nice. Washin' all put out, an' a nurse was kept—a nursery governess she was, not just a nurse girl. An', besides the two children in the family, there was nobody but the lady an' her husband.

"Of course, we have a little company, now an' then," she added. An' when I looked at her, so pleasant an' smilin', I couldn't help thinkin' that I should suppose she would have.

Well, I thought I could do the work for them, an' I went off to the country with her the next day. The first thing I noticed was that it was takin' a good deal longer to get there than the lady, Mrs. Brewer, had said. She had said it took about an hour—have you ever noticed, ma'am, that every one who lives in a suburb or a country place always says that it takes "about an hour" to get there? Well, when it was an hour an' a half that we'd been



She began to cry an' say I was better off without it, and that it had been her ruin.

goin', an' she still hadn't said anything about gettin' off, I said: "Is it much further, ma'am?" An' then she said that the train was unusually slow that day, an' was a poor train, anyway.

Well, we got there by and by, an' sure enough it was a pretty town, an' we took a hack out to her house, that was a mile or so out. It seemed her husband was a teacher, or something, that has a long vacation, an' he was at home. An' when I come to ask about settin' the table for dinner, I find there is six of them. There's Mr. and Mrs. Brewer, an' the governess, an' Mrs. Brewer's brother, who's an artist, an' who's spendin' the summer with them, an' Mr. Brewer's mother, who's there for a week, an' a young lady friend of the family. An' I was on the jump to get things on an' off the table that evenin'.

Well, the next mornin' I served two breakfasts in their rooms—the lady friend's an' Mrs. Brewer's; an' I made fresh coffee at ten for the artist brother, who hadn't been home at eight o'clock breakfast time, because he was out paintin' a sunrise or something; the sun rises, that time of year, at about four, so it couldn't have been that, I suppose; but, anyway, he was out doin' something artistic an' upsettin'. An' an automobile load of people came up just before lunch, an' I had to hustle like mad to get them fed to suit Mrs. Brewer. An' all the napkins were used up by then—Mrs. Brewer had forgotten to send any to the wash the week before—an' I had to go to work an' wash an' iron those an' get dinner, an' clear up after those dozen people's lunch, an' get the extra dinner for the children; the governess was a grand

lady an' didn't do any of that sort of work. I felt as if I should drop before evenin', an' I will say for myself that I never before left a kitchen as untidy as that one, when I crawled up to bed that night. But I couldn't have swept it if you had beaten me with the broom!

The next mornin', when bells began to ring, an' people to ask for jugs of hot water, an' ladies to say that they guessed they'd have their coffee in their rooms—with some fruit an' any little thing, like a rasher of bacon, an egg, an' a muffin!—I made up my mind that that was no place for me. An' so I told Mrs. Brewer when she came down about ten. She was mad clear through, an' said that she would have liked it better if I had known my own mind before comin' out with her, an' puttin' her to the expense an' inconvenience of another trip to the employment agency. An' Mr. Brewer's mother, she took a hand with me an' said that she didn't see quite what it was I wanted, if a good home, in beautiful, healthful surroundin's, with good wages, didn't satisfy me. But I went back.

An' then I went to a place in town where I left just because I didn't like the people—any of them, the ladies or the servants. I was to have been waitress an' chambermaid, an' I had to share the room of the cook. Well, you know how well you'd like it yourself, ma'am, to be turned into the room with a perfect stranger, an' her not a nice woman, at all. I don't like to talk about the other servants—but that cook drank, an' she came upstairs in a sad state, an' brought a bottle with her. She offered me a drink, an' when I didn't take it, she was mad at first, an' then she began to cry an' say I was right, an' that I was better off without it, an' that it had been her ruin, but that she had been driven to take it—an' all such talk.

An' I left there the third day. An' then it was that Mrs. Doran gave me the talkin' to. An' I made up my mind to try to do better about stayin'. I suppose my three ladies had really spoiled me, an' that's the truth.

The next thing that happened me, ma'am, was dreadful, or like to have been. I've always had my heart in my mouth for young greenhorns since. When a girl like me, that had been over near a year, could so near come to trouble an' grief, what's to help the greenhorns? A sort of old lady—that is, old-middle-aged, instead of young-middle-aged, like my Miss Robinsons an' Miss Oliver, came one day to Mrs. Doran's, an' she said she wanted a girl. A young girl, strong an' well, an' neat, an' not out in the States long enough to be too set in her ways.

Mrs. Doran hadn't ever seen this lady before, but the lady mentioned several of Mrs. Doran's customers, an' everything seemed all right an' straight. I came in, an' she said she wanted an upstairs girl, an' she mentioned a good neighborhood where she lived. But she said she'd call for me in her carriage, an' where would she find me? I mentioned Mrs. Kilgore's to her, for I often spent a day an' a night with the old lady when I was lookin' for a place. I was company for her, her son bein' away so much, you see, ma'am.

It just happened that Policeman Kilgore was at home, an' just awake from his sleep, an' eatin' a dish of flummery his mother had made him, when my new mistress drove around for me the next afternoon. I wasn't quite ready—she had come a little too soon—an' while I was packin' my valise, Mr. Kilgore went to the front window an' looked out. I heard him sort of exclaim, an' then he comes out, an' says to me:

"Katie, stay here for a minute; I'm knowin' that coachman of your lady's, an' I think this'll bear lookin' into." An' I hear him say something to his mother as he puts on his hat an' goes downstairs.

"Mrs. Kilgore, ma'am, what is it?" I asked her, fluttered an' frightened, an' not knowin' why.

"Sure, Katie, avick," she says to me, "Bernard says that's no private coachman, at all, the lady's got, but one that was up in the court the other day for drivin' a strange gentleman from Phil-

adelphia to some place where they robbed him; it wasn't a nice story, my dear," she said, "an' Bernard said little about it. The coachman got off only because the gentleman from Philadelphia decided not to do anything more about it, after all."

My heart was in my mouth, as I listened. An' I stood at the front window—the flat he keeps for his mother is a front one, an' as sunny as you please, ma'am—an' looked out from behind

out, an' screams to the driver to get out of this—you could hear her, in the summer weather, with the open windows. An' he came upstairs, all shakin' like, an' wipin' his face with his handkerchief. But all he said to me was: "That was no right piace for you, Katie." An' the rest he told his mother.

An' it was from that time, ma'am, that there came something else besides the fright I have on me often for the



They talk over everything that happens to the family.

the window curtain. An', by cranin' my neck, I could just make out the carriage below an' the coachman on the box an' the lady's bonnet at the glass, an' Policeman Kilgore walkin' along the other side of the street, in his plain clothes, you know, ma'am. Well, in a minute he crosses to his own side, an' goes straight up to the carriage, an' speaks to the coachman. He answers, civil-like, apparently, an' then, sudden, Policeman Kilgore pulls open the door of the carriage, an' begins talkin' to the inside, an' shakin' his fist. An' the woman pokes her head

sake of the green girls who come, an' know no one, an' have no one to help them. It was because of this that I was not only saved from harm myself, but came to save some one else in my turn.

I was so upset that I couldn't think of goin' down to Mrs. Doran's that afternoon. Mr. Kilgore, he telephoned to her about the lady, an' then it was found that the address she gave at the office wasn't a true one, at all. But that was all over an' done with.

I thought I'd go out to Joey's an' spend the night there. He'd given



What interested her was to attend conventions of Daughters-of-This and Dames-of-That; and to run the politics of those clubs.

Annie a talkin' to, I guess, for she was generally right pleasant when I went there, though she was none too proud of havin' a sister-in-law in service. But when I said I thought I'd go out there, Mr. Kilgore, he said, no, why couldn't I let him take me on a bit of an excursion? He didn't have to report at the station again until four, or maybe it was six, the next mornin', an' he'd be glad to take a bit of an outin' himself. His mother, she was keen for it, an' bade me go. An' so, finally, I got ready, an' we went on an Iron Steamboat to Coney Island. It was a lovely, bright, summer afternoon, an' we were to sail down an' have our dinner, an' see the sights, an' be home about ten.

Have you ever been on those boats, ma'am? It's a grand sail, what with the air an' the water an' the music an' the people all so gay. An' all kinds of

folks go on it, not just the poor. That afternoon there were parties of very well-to-do people, you could tell from their manners an' their clothes. An' lots of the sort of people who go on those "Seein' New York" an' "Seein' Chinatown" trips. An' there was one party aboard, sittin' opposite to where we were, that we looked at a lot—two ladies, very handsome in their clothes, an' showy altogether; an' two gentleman, well-dressed an' sort of easy an' knowin'-lookin'. An' when Mr. Kilgore saw one of them, he said to me, low-voiced: "If I'm not mistaken, there's a fellow that is takin' a risk comin' around this territory again."

I looked hard at the man, but there wasn't anything to mark him from any other man, except that he was handsomer than most, an' looked a little tired. Dissipated, I suppose, is the right word for him. But he was very

handsome. He had very dark brown hair an' eyebrows an' beard, the beard cut pointed, an' a sort of nice, brownish complexion, not sallow an' not tanned, but just nice; an' the handsomest nose, ma'am, I ever saw—like a statue's; not dented in at the forehead, the way most every one's is, but makin' almost a line with it; an' clear cut. An' in all this dark brown of him, his eyes were the bluest thing I ever saw—like the little lake behind Concnough on a sunny, windy day. I looked at him hard, at first because of what Mr. Kilgore said about him, an' then because I couldn't help lookin'. An' he had a different laugh from most men, too—more gay and freelike.

I told Bernard Kilgore I didn't see anything dangerous lookin' about him, but he laughed an' said you couldn't always tell by looks. He said, though, he wasn't sure; he only thought that this was a man the police knew very well, an' wanted to keep out of New York. I don't know what-all he was—a gambler, an' a smuggler sometimes, an' a "con" man. Altogether, a man that had been warned to keep away from New York, or so Mr. Kilgore thought.

An' the next day, sure enough, he looked it up out of curiosity, an' it was true. Either that nice-lookin' man on the boat was some one that went by the name of Lewisham, an' wasn't wanted in the city, or he was Lewisham's twin brother. Now, you just remember that, while I go on with a new part of the story.

The next day I took another place. This time it was with one of Mrs. Doran's old customers, an' there wasn't any doubt about where I was goin'. Mrs. Reed had a house in the city, on Thirtieth Street, near Park Avenue, an' a place down at Spring Lake, in New Jersey. She wasn't awfully rich, but she was very well off. A cook, two maids, an', in the country, a gardener an' coachman. The family was herself, an' Mr. Reed, an' Miss Lora Reed. Miss Lora was just about eighteen, an' was goin' to "come out" the next winter. She was a rather shy little thing,

a little delicate, I thought. They wanted me for the second maid, an' they carried me right down to the country at once.

The very first night the parlor maid told me all about the family. Sometimes, I think if I were a rich lady, I wouldn't ever have a servant in my house, 'knowin' how they talk over everything that happens to the family. But then, I suppose ladies don't trouble their heads much with what their servants are sayin' an' thinkin' about them.

Anyway, that night Nora, the parlor maid, told me that Mr. and Mrs. Reed didn't seem so awfully devoted to each other; that he was at business all day, an' went to his club almost every night, an' drank a little more than was good for him; an' that Mrs. Reed took it all very philosophically, an' didn't seem to mind much of anything, so long as she was left at liberty to do what interested her. An' what interested her was to attend conventions of Daughters-of-This an' Dames-of-That; an' to run the politics of those clubs, whatever they are; an' that she belonged to lots of clubs an' committees, an' that in town there were meetin's every day in the week, that called her out in the mornin' an' kept her most all of the day.

I asked her who managed Miss Lora, an' she said that Miss Lora managed herself. She had been to a boarding-school up on the Hudson until this summer, but she came home for Saturdays an' Sundays. An' sometimes she brought friends with her, an' once in a while she went to stay with a friend. But she was sort of quiet in her ways, an' not a bit of bother, Nora said.

Mrs. Reed was goin' off to a convention of something at Saratoga at the end of the week, an' by that time she'd found out that I liked the place well enough an' was willin' to stay. An' she said to me to look out for Miss Lora, an' she told Miss Lora that she'd better take me when she drove her own little cart. Indeed, she made me a sort of maid to Miss Lora, as well as upstairs girl in general.

It was an easy enough job. The young lady had her breakfast in bed, because she wasn't very strong an' the doctor had ordered it. I used to bring her tray in to her, an' take it away again. Sometimes I brushed out her hair for her, or buttoned her boots, if she wore high ones, or brushed her coat. But she didn't ask much of me. When she drove herself about, sometimes she asked me an' sometimes she didn't. Her father spent the week in town, comin' down on Saturday, unless business kept him.

Well, one mornin' she asks me to drive into the village with her, an' I do. She is lookin' very sweet in a white linen suit, with great wide bands of heavy Irish borderin' it, an' a floppy white Panama-y sort of hat, with a fluff of soft ribbon on it. She had a delicate, eager, shy little face, friendly, yet sort of timid. Well, I went with her that mornin'.

Well, something happened to the harness as we were drivin' along. I don't know just what, but I know the coachman was discharged when her father heard of it. An', sudden-like, we saw the horse rearin', an' the shafts comin' up, an' hittin' him in the neck. An' I don't know where we would have been at, if a gentleman hadn't jumped, like a flash, from a machine that was passin', an' held our horse by the head, while he said to us: "Get out, young ladies, get out!"



Pretendin' I had an awful toothache.

We got out, an' the other men in the automobile came an' held the horse, while the first gentleman unhitched him, an' found what was the matter, an' fixed it temporary. The men in the automobile were a horrid-lookin' lot—flashy an' coarse. But they offered to take us home. Miss Lora, however, said that she thanked them, but she would drive back if the harness would hold. An' then the first gentleman said he hoped that she'd permit him to drive her home; that, while he thought the harness would hold, he would feel safer if a stronger pair of arms than hers were drivin'.

She sort of flushed at that, an' said she would be much obliged if he would. An' I looked at him sharper, to see why he seemed sort of familiar to me. An', although he didn't have a beard, only a mustache, I thought I recognized him. He was the brown man with the straight nose an' the blue eyes that

had been on the Coney Island boat—the Lewisham man.

Well, he drove us back, an' he an' Miss Lora talked to each other, in French part of the time. It started natural enough, an' I suppose it was natural enough it should go on. But it worried me. You see, she was a little, young lady, that sort of made you feel old an' protectin'.

When she'd said good-by to him at the house, I thought we'd seen the last of him. An' it wasn't for me to say anything against him. I couldn't be quite sure, an' I was only a new servant girl. But it made me uneasy. An', do you know, it didn't make me any easier to learn from Nora that Miss Lora had money in her own right—some her grandmother had left her, an' that she would come into when she was twenty?

Well, ma'am, I suppose you can see what happened. She was so awful lonely, poor child, with her ma away half the time, an' not realizin' that she had grown up, an' her pa always at business or his club, or sort of fuddled-like. He never came to the house—the Lewisham man. I guess he thought it was safer not, for though I never heard that he'd been warned out of New Jersey, he might have thought that her father would know his New York record. An' she—well, she was the sort of girl that would think it a lot more romantic not to have him comin' to the house. An', of course, a man of his age seemed a lot finer to her than the college boys that sometimes played tennis with her, or came to call on her an' her mother.

I didn't know for a long time what was happenin' to her, though I noticed she was much more awake than she had been, an' hummed little tunes, an' had a color, an' cared more for her clothes, an' all. But I didn't know until one time, when her mother was away, representin' some Daughters or something at a world's fair they were havin' in Knoxville, Tennessee, I happened to go on an errand an' to see them together down by the beach.

There's one advantage about bein' a

servant an' not a lady; you don't have to stoop so far to do certain mean things. I didn't like to spy on her any better than—well, very little better than a lady would have liked it. But I had grown real fond of the little thing, an' when I wanted to find out what she was doin', I stooped enough to find out. They were meetin' all the time, the two of them, an' the poor little thing carried notes in the bosom of her dress. An' one day, makin' her bed, I found a letter under her pillow.

She saw me when I pulled it out. An' that gave me my chance. Mrs. Reed was off somewhere, an' so I spoke out an' said I didn't think she ought to do things unbeknownst to her parents. An' she was very hot an' haughty at first, an' then very scared that I would tell on her. But when I said I didn't think it was a gentleman her parents would care to see her take up with, she fired at once. She wouldn't listen any longer, at all, so I had no chance to tell her what I had heard. Besides, she wouldn't have believed me. An' when I thought of the brazen, painted thing he'd been on that excursion boat with, an' then thought of him with my poor little Miss Lora, who was like a droopin' little lily of the valley—it just made me plain sick.

Once I answered the telephone, an' when the voice spoke I knew it was his, by a sort of queer little shudder that went through me. My voice was muffled, I guess, for he thought it was hers, an' he said that it would have to be Jersey City, after all. I didn't know what he meant, an' I rang off, an' when he got me again, I called Miss Lora at once. She was awfully white when she came away.

I don't know that any of my people ever had second sight. I'm pretty sure we weren't important enough to have a Banshee wail when we were goin' to die. But I did have a light then. I knew that that scoundrel wanted her to marry him secretly. I didn't know what to do or who to turn to. If Mrs. Reed were at home, I felt pretty sure she'd spoil things. An' I almost never saw Mr. Reed. Besides, what they pre-

vented by force might be done by guile. I wanted to make poor Miss Lora *want* to give him up.

Well, I set to work, an' I never thought so hard. I somehow managed to persuade her to take me to New York to the dentist's, pretendin' I had an awful toothache. Somehow, I hoped that she would think it a grand chance for him to meet her, an' that she'd persuade him to take the risk—she not knowin' the risk. An' when I heard her busy at the phone after we'd decided to go up on the boat the next mornin', I felt pretty safe.

I wrote a little note, bad writer an' bad speller as I am, to Mr. Kilgore, an' I told him most of what I had in my mind, an' asked him could he do anything. An' the next day, when she put me on the dentist's steps an' went hurryin' off herself, there was his mother, with a note from him. He was on duty an' couldn't come. He wrote:

DEAR FRIEND KATIE: Agreeable to your note I have given information which has led the office to put a man on the job. He knows Lewisham. He will meet you at the boat and follow the young lady. If she meets L., L. will be spoken to by a plainclothes man an' warned of the consequences of this comin' to the city. It won't be pleasant for the young lady, but it's the best way. You'd better keep close to her, but don't let her know you had a hand in it. She might turn against you and do something silly. But if she doesn't turn against you, she'll probably turn to you. I am sorry not to see you. Your true friend,
B. KILGORE.

Well, she had said she was goin' to a store on Twenty-third Street, an' I left old Mrs. Kilgore standin', an' fairly dashed for that store. I'm a big girl, but I thought that the saints would help me to keep out of her sight. I saw her at the counter where she said she'd be, an' I saw a man pricin' sweaters opposite to her that I knew was the detective. Poor young lady! She went out by the Twenty-second Street door, an' he followed, after orderin' a sweater sent C. O. D. An', sure enough, Mr. Lewisham joined her, as bold as brass. They walked toward Fifth Avenue, slow an' uncertain. At Fifth

Avenue, they turned north—an' I skulked along behind them.

They crossed to the cab stand at Madison Square, an' I was near when a man stepped up to Mr. Lewisham, careless an' quiet, an' said: "I thought you had been warned that New York wasn't healthy for you, Lewisham?"

For a minute, he tried to bluff it out—stared an' said: "What does this infernal impudence mean?" But the Central Office man said: "Oh, come, none of that buncombe. You'd better come quietly. Sorry, miss, but——"

"Why don't you tell him your name's not Lewisham?" cried Miss Lora.

"What is it this season?" said the detective, sort of brutal, I thought. "Warren? Or Longfellow?"

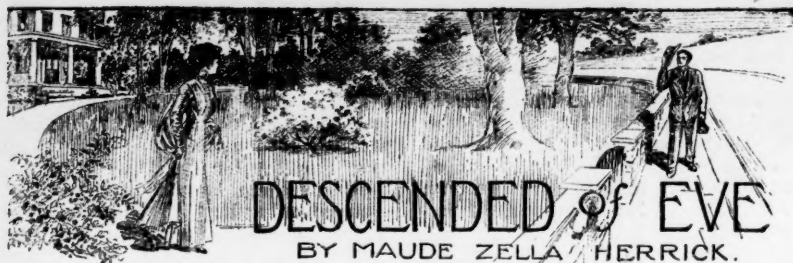
The girl turned an' looked at him—Lewisham—with such a look that I knew it must have been one of those names he was goin' by, though I hadn't ever heard it. He said something about explaining everything, an' about goin' with the detective for the sake of sparin' her further mortification. An' he turned south, an' she went an' sat under a tree in the park, on a bench with a homeless old hag of a woman, asleep. An' there, half an hour later, I pretended to stumble unexpectedly over her.

She come home with me, quiet an' pale, that night. But I left them in the fall, because they were goin' to California for her health. She was sorry to part from me, I think.

But she married a young Westerner, that owned ranches an' mines an' things. An' the last time she was East, she had plumped out something wonderful, an' has had two babies. Her mother shakes her head about her, an' says that Lora has no "civic sense," that she is a "purely individualistic an' domestic creature."

Well, I hope Miss Lora's little daughter won't ever have any such narrow escape as she had.

An' all because of that place I came near takin', an' that I had such a narrow escape from, myself! It's a braided-all-together world, isn't it, ma'am?



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

CHARLOTTE found that she liked the man. With his deliberate and unusual amount of common sense, he appealed to her as few people had. To be sure, he was engaged to her Cousin Elsie, and had been for two years. But, after all, were not engagements fragile things?

Charlotte had come from the noisy city for a little spring outing and quiet at the homes of her two aunts, who lived not far apart in the same small village. The social whirl at home had unstrung her somewhat. Not so much so, however, but that she was able and willing to enjoy an interesting man.

Charlotte's beauty was of the dark, alluring type—soft black hair, and radiant dark eyes, or, rather, dark eyes which could, with little effort on Charlotte's part, be made to look radiant. Also, she had self-confidence. Life had not refused her many things that she had wanted. She was not wicked of mind, but merely spoiled—selfish and spoiled.

David, she told herself, had seen very few really charming, accomplished women—not counting Cousin Elsie, of course, who was dear and pretty in a cuddling, ethereal, blonde way, with, however, a good deal of character and refinement about her.

After the first day or two, Charlotte abandoned herself to the pleasure of becoming well acquainted with David.

It came about that, in the mornings, as he walked past on his way to the shops, Charlotte, sitting on the veranda

with her embroidery, would stroll a ways with him—for her morning constitutional. Elsie at that time was always busied with household duties.

The aunts lived only a block apart. In the evening, when David came to call on his betrothed, Charlotte always happened to be at Cousin Elsie's, and remained present until he was gone. Occasionally, she would be spending the night at the other aunt's, which would involve David's escorting her there on his way home.

"I am assuming," she explained to Elsie, "that you and David are talked out, and don't mind my staying around. It's such a bore to be so frightfully tactful and make yourself uneasy wondering at what time you ought to withdraw, when you feel too lazy to do it. Besides, an engaged couple like you don't mind a third person, I know."

"Certainly not!" Elsie had assured her. "You mustn't think of such a thing! We enjoy you very much!"

Elsie was serenely happy. There never, never was a man like David! Life with him was going to be so pleasant and comfortable. Until she had known David her quiet young ladyhood here in the village had been a sort of starved period. But David had made up for those leaden, monotonous years.

If the lovers went driving, or on a theatre excursion to the city, Charlotte was always invited, and always accepted. There was a pleasant, harmless young man next door who had offered to escort Charlotte on some of

these occasions, but she made the excuse of having already accepted Cousin Elsie's and David's invitation. So the young man did not persist.

Gayly, during her visit, Charlotte wore all sorts of lacy, trailing, silken gowns. And she had also brought with her little graces of the city, little fascinations of manner, a silvery laugh, wit cultivated by constant contact with other wits; and a more flattering, tactful way than the village custom, which, on short acquaintance, did not show any lack of depth.

She was an excellent conversationalist. She talked a great deal to David, and he fell into the habit of addressing a good proportion of his remarks to her.

She was so appreciative. And she was something new and novel. One liked to find out what new and novel things were like. If David had thought anything about it at all, that would have been his view of it. Elsie, however, began at last to look upon it with just the least suggestion of a feeling of lonesomeness.

Never in her life, Charlotte told herself, had she met a man so well-balanced, so strong and wholesome and



She left her hand on his sleeve a little longer than she really intended

courteous. It was so satisfying, somehow, so sane and comfortable. And she had known a goodly number of men; not a few of whom had eventually come under the bewitchment of her beauty and charm.

The days passed into weeks, and still Charlotte remained. She did not yet feel herself recuperated enough to go back.

It was some time later, on a half holiday of David's, that he and Char-

lotte went for a drive alone, Elsie having decided at the last minute that her head ached too badly to go.

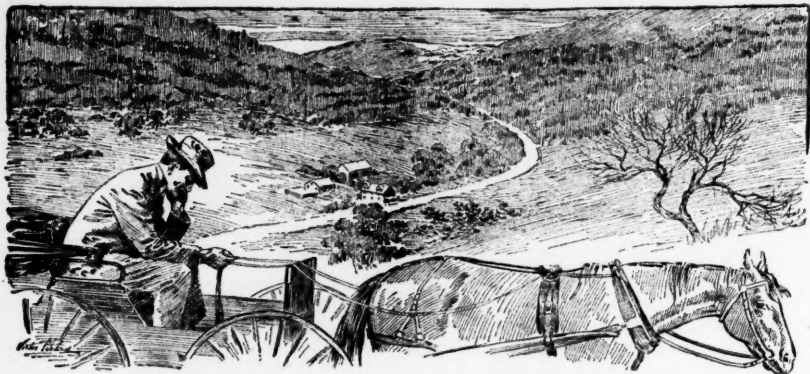
The objective point of the drive was a grassy old lane, where gnarled apple trees, in masses of pink blossoms and fragrance, leaned invitingly toward them over the thick grass.

Of course, Charlotte must have some of the blossoms. As she pointed out the particular clusters, she laid her hand on David's arm. The thing seemed somehow to have got beyond her to-day, even if she would have helped it. And Charlotte was used to doing what she wanted to do.

Late that afternoon, David left Charlotte at the other aunt's. She had not cared to go back to Cousin Elsie's that night.

He stopped at his own home just long enough to leave word for his mother that he might be away on business all night. The maid handed him a note that had come for him shortly before. He put it into his pocket unopened. Then he drove aimlessly off into the hills behind the village.

A couple of hours later, he remembered the note, and opened it. It was from Elsie, breaking their engagement.



With groping hands, like one struck blind, David guided his horse over the winding roads.

She left her hand on his sleeve a little longer than she really intended. Her beauty was more radiant than ever, her cleverness brighter, her sympathies quicker. She saw something come suddenly into his eyes—a light.

A few minutes later, as he put the apple blossoms into her grasp, his hand was laid for an instant over hers.

He was at last face to face with danger—danger to Elsie and to himself. Something flaming, burning, perilous, seemed leaping to life.

On the way home, they talked in enigmas; on love, and matrimony, in a hazy, general way. It was Charlotte who had introduced the subject. There was a vague excitement running through it all, a current underneath.

She had before her, the note ran on—in a pleasant, cheerful strain—the delightful prospect of a year in Europe, and she chose to go instead of getting married.

If David's mother could have seen her son's face then, as he sat on the dew-wrapped hills in the twilight, she would not have enjoyed as much as usual the well-served dinner beside her cozy grate.

With groping hands, like one struck blind, David guided his horse over the winding roads. To and fro all night he went, while the thing was threshed out. The spring chill did not touch him. He did not know that the hours passed.

As the pinkness of dawn came up

out of the east, he straightened up, shook himself, and drove back from the hills.

Later that morning, he called to see Charlotte. Except for a slight paleness, he showed no perturbation.

"Elsie has written me she will not marry me, after all," he began quietly. "I have come to ask you to do your best to persuade her to reconsider. She has, for a year, had the offer from her Uncle Tom of a year or so in Europe. May I speak in a perfectly frank, plain way? She puts it, that seeing your social endowments and knowledge of the world has set her to thinking that she wants to see a little more of those things herself, and acquire what she calls the culture and polish of travel, before settling down to matrimony. And she wants to feel perfectly free during this trip abroad." Coolly, calmly, he went on: "I want to put the situation before you without any reserve. What I have to say may seem to you, in a way, a failure of courtesy, but I do not mean the slightest discourtesy. Only, there is no other way to put it. I am afraid I have been drifting into—into a feeling toward you, which—" He paused for a word.

In spite of herself, a certain change came over Charlotte's face, but just the faintest of gestures, as if to put up a warning hand, stopped it.

"I do not think she really cares to



On the threshold, she turned back.

go to Europe," he went on gently, "and, if possible, in three months Elsie and I will be married, just as we had planned. In any other case, it would disturb, and maybe spoil, the lives of perhaps three people—you, Elsie, and me. Even if I should be able eventually, which is improbable, to make you care for me—this course is only a suppositious case; please don't think I am taking it for granted—even if I should be able eventually to make you care for me, it still remains the same. Supposing we take up Elsie's case first; it means more to her, perhaps, than

you think. I am saying this without personal conceit; it would be the same if some other man stood in my place; once betrothed, always betrothed, with Elsie. To you it means nothing, or almost nothing. To me, in a few weeks, everything will be as it was before you came. Elsie is ready, now, for the wedding; she has been getting ready for two years. She and I have grown into each other's ways. We are exactly suited to each other. I don't want to pose as one making a sacrifice, because happiness is here, as I have put it, for all concerned, truly, absolutely. I *know* it is the real state of the case, in spite of my sudden aberration.

"As I said before, in three months' time, if you are gone—and under the circumstances, when you understand," this gently, "perhaps you will see it your duty to help in that way—in three months, I shall be caring for Elsie as deeply as I did before you came; habit, and propinquity, or proximity, or whatever it's called, will attend to that, along with Elsie's own lovable qualities. You will be able to forget a passing flirtation sooner, shall we say, than that?"

She flushed, but continued to hold herself in an expressionless way, listening silently.

"The thing came suddenly; it is only an uneasiness that will vanish suddenly. Elsie and I are suited to each other in tastes, disposition, manner of living, education, surroundings, family, everything; you and I are not. I shall never be anything more than a mechanic who has had rather a good education and some advantages. Your place is higher, I think, than that. You would see it in time."

She hazarded only one question, passing over all references to herself. "Can Elsie be made to reconsider?" she asked.

"I think so," he replied earnestly. "I can keep at it until she does."

As he said it, Elsie's face came suddenly before his mind; a sweet, sensitive face, with happy eyes. There were

far-reaching possibilities in those eyes, and charm also, but more than anything a wonderful bit of character, the power of rising to heights unknown to the brown eyes opposite him. Of a sudden there came to him an intuition—that his imagination had supplied Charlotte with qualities she did not possess, misled by her outward graces.

"Time heals all bruises," he went on evenly, "except, perhaps, with a woman like Elsie. Elsie is a remarkable woman. You may not have known her closely enough to have found it out, but I have had that pleasure. She is genuine, as true as steel."

She was beginning to catch his spirit, the spirit of strong, cool, far-seeing judgment. It seemed all at once to lift her up to its own level, from which she, too, could look down upon the situation calmly, dispassionately—ready for what was best. The self-mastery involved sent a sudden thrill through her. It was the strangest experience of her life.

"Yes," she replied, "I believe you are right—entirely right." And in this new spirit, she said it with perfect sincerity.

The next instant, her aunt's voice called to her from the library. A second later, Charlotte left the room. On the threshold, she turned back.

"Every one," she said, in a quiet tone, "has acted nobly, in the present instance, except myself. I, however"—she said it without heat—"have perhaps learned something along that line which I needed to know."

He bowed and smiled, then opened his lips to speak. That he might not feel called upon to contradict her, she closed the door quickly and sought her aunt.

Ten minutes later, she walked calmly, composedly, down the path to the other aunt's, to pack up. As she closed the gate, she said, half aloud:

"I believe he would have made a woman of me, after all—if— But perhaps his not doing as the others have done will accomplish it—and do it better."



ROSE DEAN

By Robert Duncan

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

NOW do I go on?"

"Lord love ye, little girl, not for twenty minutes yet. Gee, but you're badly rattled. What are you doing in vawderville, anyhow? You're not one of us."

Big, good-humored Jack Waters, equilibrist, had just finished his first afternoon turn, and had been anxiously questioned by the pallid, yet pretty, little woman who was standing in everybody's way, waiting to make her début before the footlights.

"Don't tell me that," she replied. "I *must* be one of you, or else give up. And besides," she went on quickly, "I had my palm read last night, and I was told that to-day I would have a piece of great luck. The only luck that can come to *me* is success in my act."

They were standing near the wings.

"Just as cheap to sit down," said Jack awkwardly, indicating a box. "You ain't no business here, because any one can see wit' half an eye that you're an amachure, an' you ain't likely to go—of a Monday. If it was Friday, it might be different."

"Why?"

"Why, amachure night, you know. But, say, don't give up. I'd like to see you hit 'em. It's me for success for every one, all the time, on'y the odds is against it in your case."

Rose Dean put up her hand. "Please

don't talk any more like that. I *must* succeed, you know. If I can't make a go of this"—she hesitated—"I'll go and join my husband."

Waters bent over, in a fatherly way. "Say, take my advice, little girl. Jern him now. Make it up, and make him support yer. Where is he?"

"He was drowned."

Jack laid his big hand on the young woman's shoulder, and patted her.

"Say, I didn't mean no harm, lady," said he. "I thought it was the usual thing. Hubby too gay, an' a case of givin' him the go-by. So he was drowned. Hard lines. Sailor?"

"Oh, no." There was something sympathetic in the personality of the big fellow standing by her, and, almost unaware that she was talking, she was soon telling him her somewhat unusual story.

"We'd only been married a few months, and Mr. Herndon was making a name for himself as an architect."

"Who's Mr. Herndon?"

"My husband. I took my maiden name when I decided to try this."

"Gee, I'm thick. Go ahead."

"We lived in Pennsylvania, in a little river town, and one day the waters began to rise—freshet, you know. It was in the spring. We thought our house was safe, because it lay up the bank quite a distance. Some of our

neighbors moved out of their houses, but Mr. Herndon said we'd be safe, and when night came the water seemed to be at a standstill.

"I never saw him again. I was roused from my sleep by a fearful crash, and then something hit me on the head; and, when I came to my senses, I was in a hospital in Pittsburg, and my husband was drowned."

"Hard lines, little lady. Damn hard."

In front there was a sound of great

member that most of 'em out front is slobs. Here yer go. They're changin' cards."

Tightly clasping her hands together, Rose Dean went out on the stage for the first time in her life. She had sung in a church choir, and she had sung at community gatherings, but never before had she faced a "pay audience," and her knees grew weak as she neared the front of the stage. Oh, what a glare of light! And how many enemies there seemed to be in the audience. Not



"If I can't make a go of this—I'll go and join my husband."

applause. A comedian had blown a mouthful of bread in the face of a brother devoted to the same art of refined comedy, and the subtle stroke had gone home to nearly every one in the audience.

Waters looked in. "The Dempseys is near through their turn." He pronounced it "toin." "Better fergit everything but success now. I'll stan' here, an' wish yer luck."

Tears came into Rose's eyes. "You're very kind," said she.

"Kind? Shucks!" was Jack's gruff response. "Now, jus' remember that you've got to do your pretties', an' re-

a soul who knew her, or who realized that she must make a success or end all.

Suddenly, she heard the opening bars of her first song, and, clinching her fists at her side, she drew in her breath to begin. Some one tittered. The titter spread. If this was a serio-comic, she was beginning well. She looked the part of the awkward novice to the life.

If she had been a serio-comic artist, how the tittering would have encouraged her! It would have been as sips of life-giving wine to her, and she would have been able to forget self,

and enter into the burlesque. But as it was, the tittering was like so many slaps in the face. She sang two or three lines in a weak, husky voice, and then the accompanist, as if deliberately, made a bad mistake in the accompaniment; she allowed herself to think of it instead of thinking of her work, and in a moment she stood there, frightened so that her music and lines were absolutely forgotten. Her hands strayed up to her throat uncertainly.

A laugh came to her from the wings, and a deep voice said: "Keep it up. You've got 'em laughin'."

Got them laughing! Oh, the irony of it!

Still the kindly voice enabled her to make a new start, and signaling the contemptuous accompanist to begin again, she managed to remember the words of the song, and sang it through to the end, her voice growing stronger as she sang.

There was a little applause here and there, but it was very slight. She was evidently a mere singer, and the audience had set her down for an impersonator. It was like biting into a cream puff that turned out to be an oyster patty.

Rose Dean was down for three songs, and she sang all three without further mishap, and then went off the stage with an applause that did not last more than a few feet.

The world looked black to her. The people out front were cruel. The man at the piano had murdered her music, and had seemed to do so wantonly, for at rehearsal he had played it through without a mistake. There was nothing left for her in life. She *would* join her husband.

"Not at all bad. Not at all bad," said Mr. Jack Waters, who had waited for her to finish, that he might say something kindly to her. "A little too high-toned, but I guess it's all right. But I'll gi' ye a tip. Let 'em have somep'n' to laugh at next time. I thought it was comical w'en you began. Laugh an' de woild laughs wit' yer. That's right. You'll get 'em goin' if you can make 'em laugh. So-long."

The good-hearted giant went down to his noisome dressing room—all the dressing rooms in the McVey were noisome—and Rose Dean went to hers, but on the way there she was met by the manager, who, scowling at her, said:

"Say, what was the matter? Most distressing thing that ever happened in this theatre. I guess you won't do."

She looked up at him timidly. "Then I'm not to come back?"

"Sure you're to come back. Gee, yes, you're to come back! Ain't your name on the bills? On'y don't let it happen again, or it's no salary for yours."

"The accompanist made a mistake."

The manager, a burly fellow, with a curly black mustache, looked down at her as if she had said something damnable heretical.

"You're talkin' through your hat. He's the best in the business. He played twenty-four hours without stoppin' once. The mistake that was made was when I let you have a try. Now, remember, at six."

She got into her street clothes and went out of the theatre. At the stage door a would-be sport stood, twirling a cane.

"Ah, there, Mabel! Feel like walkin'?"

She felt more like running. Drawing her arms to her sides rigidly, she hurried past the man, and stepped aboard a car, with no clear idea as to where she would go.

How could she again face the humiliation of standing before an unsympathetic audience and singing songs they did not care to hear?

And then the words of the genial giant came to her. "'Laugh an' the woild laughs wit' yer.'"

Why shouldn't she sing something funny? She had a keen sense of humor, although the tragic fate of her husband and the many down-dragging events that had followed on her emergence from the hospital had served to temporarily deaden it.

Why, the first time that Tom Hern- don had ever seen her was at a church

entertainment in her home town of Kittanning, Pennsylvania, where she had sung a popular comic song of the day. Its humor lay in the absolute seriousness of her delivery of the ridiculous lines, and she had been called upon to sing another and another. And Tom had told her that he fell in love with her because she had that rare thing in woman—a sense of humor.

The palmist had told her that she was to have a piece of great luck. Plainly it would not come from singing serious songs to the sort of people who were in the afternoon audiences. She would try something funny.

She left the car and went to her little room on a side street, encouraged already. In her roll of music she found three songs that in amateur circles could be depended upon to win encores,

and began to practice them as best she could without the piano's aid.

Rose Herndon had the faculty of detachment. She could place herself off and view herself almost as dispassionately as she could another. What had made the audience titter when she went out? The fact that she was awkward.

She looked in the glass. Hers was not a bad-looking face. Tom had often told her that she was pretty. She had a good stage presence. She would dress herself with just a touch of the ludicrous. She would accentuate her gaucheries, and perhaps the palmist's prediction would come true.

Of a healthy temperament, Rose's thought of self-destruction had not lasted long, and she passed the hours of the afternoon in perfecting herself in her new songs. Then she went to

the theatre, and was fortunate enough to meet the alternate accompanist who had just come in, and who willingly ran over her songs with her.

He was plainly more sympathetic than his confrère of the twenty-four hours of continuous harmony, for when she had finished her first song he paid her the compliment of saying: "Dat's a hot dish of tripe."

She had never heard the phrase before, but she felt sure that it was equivalent to high praise, his tones being full of sincerity.

Jack Waters came in and descended to his dressing room to prepare himself for his second appearance. When he came up and heard her singing in the subdued tones that were necessary, as the performance was still going on, he said:

"That's the stuff. Make 'em laugh. Oh, you'll be the scream of the town before you know it. Sure!"



"Most distressing thing that ever happened in this theatre!"

His kindly nod and the generous words heartened her considerably.

The alternate accompanist began his day's duties when she went out, and was of a different type from the other, who was very gruff, rather drunken, and, despite the confidence of the manager in his tenacity of purpose, never as certain of his fingers as Paderewski, for instance.

Again the comedians went out, and one blew bread at the other, and tickled the eyes of groundlings and gods alike, and then Rose went on for the second time. This time, also, she was excessively nervous, but she was not absolutely afraid as she had been before. Her descent into the depths had made her feel that she had passed the worst. Absolute failure would mean nothing more than the loss of her week's salary. After that she could try something else—millinery or sewing.

She went out with designedly awkward steps, and this time her make-up—in the preparation of which she had been helped by a female contortionist—and costume helped to emphasize her pose. She nodded to the friendly accompanist, and he gave her a nod of encouragement, and played the opening bars of the song.

Taking a deep breath, she plunged in with absolutely immobile face, remembering to make her enunciation as clean-cut as possible.

With such an impassive face, and with such absurd lines as the song contained, the audience's sense of incongruity could not help being stirred, and more than a titter, a hearty laugh, greeted her before she had reached the end of the first verse. The titter had dismayed her before, but now the genuine laugh encouraged her as much as if she had been complimented in well-chosen words.

When the song was finished, the chorus having proved a "winner," she bowed to the audience, and waves of warmth surged through every vein. It was good to be liked. This was a better audience than the first. The palmist was right; she was to have good luck befall her, after all.

The second song was not so well received, but the third, a mildly roguish one, brought an encore, and, moved by a spirit of mischief, she sang the song she had failed in earlier in the day.

Singing it now with exaggerated awkwardness and with whimsical emissions of tone, the effect was something like the efforts of an opera singer who has lingered on the stage years after the passage of her voice to the limbo of things forgotten, and there were enough sophisticated ones in the audience to make its appreciation felt by Rose. But she let well enough alone, and did not respond to a second encore.

She almost ran into the arms of Waters, and he, with no meaning of offense in the world, caught her up and hugged her as one might hug a clever child.

"You done *bully*! I told you it would be easier the secon' time. You'll do the gran' chain w'en the week's out. Mark my woids."

Flushed with pleasure, she thanked him, and hurried to her dressing room. She would go on again at eight-thirty. Oh, if she could make a hit with the evening audience, always the best one, and get reëngaged! It would be good to make some money, even if there was only herself in the world. She no longer wished to die.

Ah, the intoxication of success before the footlights! It is the most delicious thing in the world, and your actor is the happiest of men while yet the sound of the applause is in his ears.

As Rose passed out, she again met the manager.

"That was something like," said he. "But, gee, this afternoon it was rotten. Had yer been drinkin'?"

She did not answer the brute, but with flushed cheeks went on out. The man at the stage door said to her: "There was a feller wanted to see you. Been hangin' around."

Rose's face turned white with terror. "I don't want to see *anybody*. Tell them I'm gone home—anything. Probably it was the man of the afternoon."

She looked up and down the street, and, choosing a time when no one was

passing, she ran to the refuge of a car, as before.

And when, a few minutes later, the man who had asked for her came around again, she was safe in her room.

She dined rather better than was her wont. She felt the need of ample sustenance, for her work had exhausted her, and now that the first excitement had passed off, she felt weak.

Before she went back in the evening she began to wonder whether the risks and the small pay were worth the nervous strain and the exploiting of her personality before the public.

She was a woman of native refinement and a fair amount of education, and unless she could rise to something higher than cheap vaudeville, she felt that she would encounter daily insults and nerve-racking experiences that would make the question, is life worth living, a vital one.

She entered the theatre together with Jack Waters. "Say, you've caught on, all right," said he. "The Johnnies has begun to take notice. Want to look out for 'em. You're a straight girl, an' you want to look out for those guys."

Terrified, she said to Waters: "How can I make them stop speaking to me? There was one spoke to me this afternoon, and another was asking for me to-night."

"Yes, I know; I met him. I gave him a bit o' my mind, although he wasn't as bad as some. On'y for your sayin' you was alone in the world, I'd 'a' thought he was all right."

"Oh, *no*," said Rose, with intensity. "It isn't right, at all. I don't know a soul in the city, beyond my landlady, and I don't want to."

"Leave 'em alone, an' they won't bother long. It soon gets out if a girl is straight. You min' your own business, an' hurry away w'en you're through."

He smiled pleasantly to her, and went down to his dressing room, and she to hers, and it was not long before she was making her first evening appearance.

She "caught on" from the start. McVey's was a rather unusual vaudeville theatre, in that its evening audience was far better than its afternoon ones. Many men who did not care to go downtown to the theatre district dropped in to McVey's, to see the moving pictures and the two or three good turns that were provided with every programme. And this evening with one accord the audience decided that Rose Dean had come to stay. She reminded one of some of the English vocalists, but her manner was not as boisterous. Then, too, there was an air of amateurishness that was not at all bad—most of the singers were so self-assured and so self-satisfied; yes, there was no doubt of it that Rose Dean had been accepted.

She did far better than she had done at either of the early performances, and so Jack Waters would have said if he had been there to see. But he was hurrying into his street clothes, to act as bodyguard for her, although as she would have to dress before going out, there was really no need of hurry.

Jack was not averse to a pleasant fight, and if any Johnnies attempted to say anything to this girl from a higher sphere, why, he would just as soon hand out a few as not.

He waited for her outside the stage door, and while he was waiting a couple of men came out of the theatre and passed by. One of them said to the other: "Oh, she's a little peach. As good as Guilbert. She's new to me, all right. Rose Dean. Good name."

"Yes, she's got a good name, be gee, an' she'll keep it," muttered Jack to himself.

Another man came around from the front, and slackened his pace as he neared the stage door. He was young, smooth-shaven, and not of the type of man who haunts stage doors. Jack recognized him at once as the man who had asked for Rose earlier in the day.

"Has Rose Dean come out?" he said to Jack.

Jack, with a touch of growl in his voice, said: "Nar, she hasn't, an' what business is it of yours?"

To Jack's surprise, the man flared up at once.

"What business is it of yours, to talk to me like that? I want to see her, and I thought perhaps you knew."

Honest Jack, knowing how the land

stepped back a pace, but still hung around.

"It won't be safe for you around here w'en she comes out, me frien'. You near frightened the life out of her w'en she first came out. That's what



Rose rushed to the prostrate man and fell on him, sobbing and crying.

lay, determined to balk this fellow by tactics that suddenly occurred to him.

"Well, look here, me frien'. Rosie Dean ain't goin' wit' any one but me. She picked me out some time ago, an' she goes wit' me. We play the circuit togedder. Get the idea?"

The man evidently got the idea, and it did not seem to please him. He

she thinks of your mug. Skiddoo, for yours!"

But the man showed no inclination to go on. He stood his ground, and just then the door was cautiously opened, and Rose peeped out.

On seeing her, the man stepped forward, and had the audacity to call "Miss Dean" by her first name.

This was too much for Jack, and his firm and hard and impulsive fist knocked the stranger to the ground.

But Rose, instead of thanking Jack and calling him her savior, as would have been the proper thing in a dramatic sketch, rushed to the prostrate man and fell on him, sobbing and crying.

"Tom, Tom! Has he killed you, Tom? And weren't you drowned?"

Which questions to an inanimate man were in the nature of farce, although to Rose the situation was tragic.

As Jack told it to the female contortionist:

"You see, here was me, the chump, givin' it to him, good an' plenty, an'

him her husband, that wasn' drowned any more than she was, on'y stunned, an' out of his nut till she had been picked up an' taken to the hospital. An' w'en he fin's her playin' here, he tries to get to see her, an' I, like a mutt, nearly lays him out fer good. Never copped the idea, at all."

"It's lucky he was only stunned. Will she go on playin'?"

"Nar. He pays a forfeit an' lights out with her to-morrer. The palmist told her she'd have good luck, an' she got it, all right. Nice little girl. An' w'at do you think?"

"What?"

"W'en he come aroun' she thanks me fer blindin' him, because she seen how I meant it. Sure thing! A nice little lady!"



COMPENSATION

A GALE has blown the elm tree bare,
But in the twigs o'erhead
A nest, a robin's long, sweet care,
Shows in the bright leaves' stead.

Who minds the fluttering tree's gay loss
With that snug home in view,
Where late a breast of ruddy gloss
Caressed the eggs' pure blue?

Sweetheart, your girlhood falls away
Like summer's leafy grace;
Home-love and mother-magic stay,
Still lovelier, in its place!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

THE UNDOING OF EDGAR

BY
HARRIET
McAULEY
MORSE



ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

THE lights of the street lamps intermittently flashed through the windows of a motor brougham smoothly rolling through the quiet avenues, and fell on the gravely important face of a young man, and on that of a girl raptly intent upon what the young man was saying.

"Remember, Sally," he concluded, as the brougham slowed gently, and then stopped before a towering apartment building, "remember that Mrs. Sturgis and the other people whom you will meet to-night are my very best friends—the chosen few, as it were. They afford me an intellectual companionship which is, of course, essential to a man of my—um—tastes. They are all men and women who have distinguished themselves in the artistic world; I do not mean that they have necessarily achieved material success, but among those of their own kind their genius is recognized fully. After all, that is the best, the highest reward. There is always a flavor of vulgarity about a vogue for an author or an artist. My

own success has been somewhat of a bore to me."

"Oh, Edgar, don't say that," the girl cried, her eyes glowing with an admiration as genuine as it was unconcealed. "You are so wonderful, and you write so beautifully—how could you help being popular?"

"Don't, Sally; I beg of you. Don't say that I write beautifully, or that I am"—he shuddered visibly—"a popular author. My dear child, do try to-night to be as little—as little immature as possible. I want you, my dearest, to make the best impression possible on my friends; and I fear that they may be critical—just a bit critical."

Some of the delicate color faded from her cheeks, and a trifle chilled by his answer she preceded him to the elevator, which, with great deliberation, descended at last from gloomy heights above, and as it creaked its leisurely way upward she pressed closer to his side, with a timid air as of one seeking protection from danger to be faced.

The other guests were assembled,

and all eyes turned curiously toward Sally as she stood timidly hesitating at the door. Mrs. Sturgis, a buxom lady in what appeared at first sight to be a wrapper of the genus Mother Hubbard, but which to the best of her intentions was a gown à l'Empire, rose to greet them. She had large and rolling blue eyes, which had a disconcerting habit of suddenly ceasing their search of walls and ceiling to fall upon you, and either pierce you with a soul-searching glance or confuse you by becoming suffused with tears, while their owner appealed to you for sympathy in some æsthetic emotion all her own. She had also a nervous little laugh with which she punctuated her sentences and prefaced and applauded all her own witticisms. This, if the eyes had not already reduced you to confusion, effectually completed your discomfiture.

"It is such a pleasure"—she took Sally's hand between her two fat ones and pressed them—"to meet Edgar's fiancée at last. I was *désolé* to miss you the afternoon I called on you and your aunt"—the laugh was here in evidence—"such a concession as that to the conventions from one so truly unconventional, was the tribute of my life to dear Edgar. You are a fortunate girl to have won his affections."

The tone of this sudden ending seemed to border on reproof, and Sally had a confused impression of being reprimanded for having taken Edgar from this, his sphere.

She was now introduced to the other guests, who, after a word or two of congratulation, left her to her host. Dinner impended, judging by the odors occasionally wafted through an opening door, but it was some time before it was finally announced; and, in the meantime, after a few formal remarks, Mr. Sturgis discoursed at length on certain defects in the rendition of a Tchaikowsky symphony at the last concert. Sally, not having heard the concert, and knowing little of the technique of music, murmured apologetically of her ignorance, but he enjoyed his subject, and, feeling himself to be a musical critic of no small ability, was

not to be deterred, and seemed to ask of her only an uninterrupted chance to talk.

This gave her opportunity to note her fellow guests. There were four beside herself and Edgar. A lean, dark little woman with black hair drawn tightly back from her forehead and piercing black eyes which flashed as she conversed, and which seemed to smoulder resentfully when she was silent, was talking with much animation to a large, bland-looking man, whose face wore a perpetual smile of self-satisfaction.

Edgar leaned over the chair of a young woman with brilliant red hair and much slender length of figure, which was displayed to some advantage by the clinging draperies of her black gown. Edgar looked very noble as he stood there, Sally thought; his heavy, protruding forehead, and large head, were to her the visible signs of his intellectual greatness, and she was too inexperienced to attach significance to his small, effeminate mouth with its thin lips, or to the weak chin below. The extreme correctness of his clothes, which to others might speak of foppishness or extreme self-love, were to her evidence only of fastidiousness, as the cold, calculating eyes, light hazel in color, seemed to her the eyes of a man used to living in an inner world—their lack of warmth merely abstraction.

She turned her gaze from him to the man with whom Mrs. Sturgis was talking, and liked immediately his clean-cut lower face and boyishly honest blue eyes. He was Sidney Webster, whose portraits were rapidly becoming famous, and whose success in his own city seemed to imply larger triumphs for his later years.

She recognized them all, for Edgar had duly impressed her with their attainments. The little woman was a Miss Sneed, journalist and socialist; the bland man, Willoughby Wilkins, a singer of local reputation, with grand-opera aspirations not to be quenched, or, judging by present indications, ever to be gratified. The younger woman was Olga Selwynne, one of a band who were endeavoring to uplift the stage by

thoroughly refined and cultured rendering of thoroughly erotic plays. And she herself—for she seemed forced to a comparison—was just a silly little girl whom Edgar Black, the successful novelist, had allowed to love him and become engaged to him.

In all her frivolous young life she had never dreamed of such an honor coming to her. She had gone to the best schools at home, with afterward a year or two in France, but she had not been bothered very much with studies; the most severe of her teachers had been lenient where she was concerned, and there were so many gay, delightful things to do with one's life, why take it seriously?

But when she met Edgar she realized how defective her education had been, and bitterly regretted it. She told him so one day, and he assured her that he loved her in spite of her being such a little idiot. Of course, he had not so expressed it, but his manner made the inference unmistakable, and instead of being properly resentful, she was humble enough and inexperienced enough to be deeply grateful to him for loving her at all.

At dinner, Sally found herself between her host and Webster. Having exhausted the subject of the symphony and finding her totally unresponsive, Mr. Sturgis essayed to give the conversation a lighter tone, and began, quite inapropos of anything, to quote "Alice in Wonderland" to her. As his face wore the gravity of expression of a grandfatherly owl, and his voice had a depth almost sepulchral, Sally felt herself utterly bewildered and torn between a desire to laugh hysterically and a longing to call for aid. She turned appealingly to Webster, and found him watching her curiously. He seemed instantly to see her embarrassment, and leaning forward, said to Sturgis:

"Haven't you monopolized Miss Aishton long enough? Am I to have no show at all?" And then, without waiting for an answer, said to Sally: "You seemed to be thoroughly enjoying the Danes' ball last night."

"Oh, were you there?" she cried hap-

pily, feeling familiar ground under foot. And so on for a comfortable twenty minutes, from one subject of like kind to another, when suddenly in the middle of an anecdote of a mutual acquaintance she heard her name spoken by Miss Sneed from across the table. Miss Sneed was leaning toward her, her angular elbows well forward on the cloth, and a look of malice in her sharp eyes.

"We have been discussing D'Annunzio, Miss Aishton," she said. Her voice, loud and clear, arrested the attention of every one. "What do you think of him?"

The animation died out of Sally's face. She felt the hot blood mounting brow and cheek. She looked miserably around the dinner table, with its candles in their perforated copper *l'art nouveau* shades, its one rose in a vase of approved lines. Edgar's expression was severe, forbidding; the look of expectancy on the other faces seemed to have something hostile in it.

"I—I don't know who he is," she faltered.

The look of amused surprise in the others, the subdued sparkle of triumph in Miss Sneed's eyes, told her that what she had feared was true; her not knowing D'Annunzio was regarded as a *faux pas*, if not positively as a petty crime, by their more enlightened intelligences. "You forget, Miss Sneed"—Webster's voice was calmly courteous, but with a note of challenge—"that even in this advanced age many young girls are not allowed to read D'Annunzio or to see his plays."

Sally turned to him gratefully. She had looked for help from Edgar, but he was gazing moodily at the table. Miss Sneed, however, was not to be thus easily turned aside.

"Oh, quite true. But what dramatist do you like?"

"I—oh, I don't know. I like Barrie—I like 'Peter Pan,' and 'What Every Woman Knows,' and plays like that. I can't always remember who wrote them."

Miss Sneed leaned ingratiatingly farther forward. She disliked Edgar intensely, even though professedly his



A heavy cloud of smoke soon filled it, and an atmosphere of would-be bohemianism crept in.

friend, and she was deriving exquisite enjoyment from what she felt certain was his discomfiture.

"And novels—you surely have some favorite authors?"

"Oh, yes; I like Edgar's books—and Dickens. I am very fond of him," she said, with the simplicity of a child.

A little murmur went around the table.

"How seldom one hears Dickens mentioned," Miss Selwynne commented languidly.

"Quite archaic, almost mediæval," Mr. Wilkins agreed.

Mrs. Sturgis rolled her eyes mournfully toward Edgar, as if commiserat-

ing with him on the fate so soon to overtake him.

Then once more Sally's self-appointed knight rose to her rescue.

"I'm glad you like Dickens, Miss Aishton. Evidently our friends haven't read that very brilliant essay of Chesterton's, or they might have revised their opinions as to his being obsolete and forgotten. My opinion is that he never will be—not that I amount to much as a critic, but I know that no one else goes straight for my heart-strings as he does."

She dared not look at him, for she felt the hot tears of mortification welling beneath her eyelids, but for one

moment she rested her hand on his sleeve, in mute gratitude. No one saw her; but Webster, light as the touch was, felt it, and recognized the utter lack of self-consciousness, the childishness of heart, which prompted it. He felt a strong impulse to pick her up in his arms, just as he would any other little child who was being made wretched, and take her away from these people, always amusing to him because of their affectations and pedantry, but now suddenly grown hateful.

He devoted himself to her during the remaining half hour at the table, while a general conversation flowed about them; for Sally, having proved herself a Philistine beyond question, was ignored. Even his kindness, however, and his efforts to amuse her, during the rest of the dinner, could not make her comfortable or happy. She was miserably conscious that she had appeared at her worst, that Edgar must be ashamed of her. She watched him covertly, but he never glanced at her; and, remorseful and wretched, she scarcely answered Webster's questions.

As Miss Sneed and Miss Selwynne smoked, the men went back to the living room with them. A heavy cloud of smoke soon filled it, and an atmosphere of would-be bohemianism crept in. Mr. Sturgis produced a short black pipe, and lolled comfortably on a couch, from whence he projected occasionally an original limerick. Mr. Wilkins, being asked to sing, filled the room with Wagnerian music, sung in a barytone voice so big and heavy that Sally wondered if the walls of the room would not burst with its volume. Having, with perfect safety to them, but with deafening effect to sensitive ears, subsided, he was followed by Miss Sneed, who rendered some *café chantant* ditties, the accompanying vicious leers sitting oddly on her ugly little dark face.

Then, being urged warmly by her hostess, Miss Selwynne uncoiled herself from the large chair in which she was sunk and recited a dramatic poem with much exercise of the range of notes in her deep, rich voice. Webster declared that he had no accom-

plishments, and Edgar told of his experience in a lumber camp, where he had gone for material for a story, figuring himself as something of a hero, while Sally listened, breathlessly admiring.

"Don't you sing or play?" Webster asked her, in a low voice, that the others might not hear question or reply.

"Oh, nothing worth while," she answered. "I love to play simple little things, ballads and—but Edgar says I really have no voice, that I should not try to sing for people."

"I should like to hear you for myself." Webster looked grimly across at Edgar. "May I come some day to see you—and will you sing for me?"

"Oh, I should love to have you," she declared warmly. "But not to hear me sing."

"Just to see you, then." He smiled down at her. "I may come soon?"

"Yes," she answered, "do come."

II.

Edgar was kind, but cold, on the way home, and her hand, which she had slipped into his, met with no responsive pressure. He had much to say of the intellectuality of Miss Selwynne's rendering of the difficult poem she had recited; of her almost tropical beauty, an unusual combination with such a mind; he should use her as a model for the heroine of his contemplated new novel, he thought.

Sally, the least jealous of women, was conscious of a feeling of resentment, which she quickly stifled with the thought that, as Edgar had often told her, the artistic side of a man's nature must be considered quite separately; and it was doubtless to that side which Miss Selwynne appealed. Her own claim on Edgar was assured, she felt, by her engagement. And yet, why did he care for her? She knew perfectly how different she was from these people who were his friends. What attracted him to her? She was silent, and still pondering it when they reached the door.

"Won't you come in, Edgar?" she asked. "I'm awfully hungry, and Simms will make us some sandwiches. Mrs. Sturgis isn't a—well, dear, I'm just hungry," laughing up at him.

"No, thank you. I am not at all hungry. Mrs. Sturgis' dinners are not, perhaps, equal to those of your friends, but one goes there for intellectual, rather than material enjoyment."

His tone was one of offended disgust with her own materialness of view. He kissed her coldly, and started down the steps. She was for the first time slightly angry with him. Then her generous heart misgave her, and she called after him.

"Well, at least let Jones take you home. The brougham is waiting for you, dear, if you won't stay." She came halfway down the steps to him. "I am sorry, dear, if—if I seemed stupid to-night."

The cold white light of a November moon shone full on the sweet face above the soft, dark fur collar of her cape. Her hair, gold in the sun, made a silvery halo, as of concentrated moonlight, about it. Her small, red mouth was quivering, and her eyes were full of repentant deprecation. She was such a little thing. As she stood, two steps above him, her eyes were still below his. Softened by her beauty, he would have gathered her to him, but Simms was waiting attentively by the open door, the chauffeur was below, so he simply pressed her hand to his lips and left her.

III.

Webster, having walked, arrived at the club to which they both belonged, and where Edgar Black lived, at the same moment that that gentleman stepped leisurely from Sally's brougham. Together they went into the card-room, and found it deserted, except for Paul Southworth, a journalist and poet, always seedy, but always gay and debonair, and Townsend Howells, a successful writer of short stories. Webster they greeted with shouts of welcome; Edgar with more reserve.

When the whisky was poured and the soda foamed into each glass, Webster raised his.

"To your happiness, Edgar, you lucky dog!"

Edgar acknowledged the toast stiffly.

"What's this? Edgar going to be married?" Howells queried.

"Yes; where have you been, man? To Miss Aishton—Miss Sally Aishton."

"Don't know the lady, but I don't doubt she's charming. Edgar's taste was always good. I had an idea that Olga Selwynne——"

"I admire Miss Selwynne very much," Edgar interrupted, "but I have, you know, certain theories concerning marriage. Men of artistic temperament, like ourselves"—he condescendingly included them in his gesture—"should choose wives who will be a background, as it were, for them. Intellectual companionship is delightful, but we can obtain that elsewhere; and in our homes we need a certain calm, a surety of things running smoothly, which the intellectual woman seems incapable of producing. A woman like Miss Selwynne, for instance, is inspiring—a subject for dramas, poems, pictures—but hardly to be chosen for the head of one's establishment, hardly the one to ease the strain of a man's brain work."

He paused impressively. Webster regarded the sandwich he was eating with a ferocious look.

"Miss Aishton, then, you would not consider inspiring?" he asked grimly.

"Hardly that—hardly. A dear, delightful child! But I should think," gloomily, "that, after to-night, you would scarcely need to ask that, Webster. Well, good night; I must correct some proof; my publisher is becoming insistent. Good night."

"Damn cad!" Webster growled under his breath as Black left the room.

Howells blew a cloud of smoke into the air, and watched it contemplatively.

"How on earth that fellow can write as he does is beyond me—self-satisfied, pedantic, conceited ass that he is—and yet, Jove, how he can write! He cer-



Sally gave an exclamation of surprise, and then stood for a moment, mute before it.

tainly has two sets of ideas; one for professional and the other for daily use."

"He's converted me to spiritualism," said Southworth. "He has a 'control,' mark my words; a Balzac or a Thackeray, or some one or other who guides his pen. What's Miss Aishton like, Webster? You seem to know her."

"Like? She's like a rose petal or an apple blossom, or a ray of moonlight,

or—or anything else exquisitely fanciful and beautiful you can think of. Why, man, it's a crime, a *crime*, for her to waste herself on that——"

"Careful, Sid, old boy. Tell us about her, without poetic rhapsodies, in plain English."

"Well, I never saw her until last night at the Danes'. I singled her out in the ballroom, little as she is, for she seemed to me like—look out, more

poetry—a blossom floating about. There's a lightness to her, an airiness which I can't describe. I asked about her immediately, and was told that she was the daughter of Sam Aishton. He died, you know, a few years ago, and left her millions. She's been brought up by an aunt, for her mother died when she was a child. The Aishtons were rather ordinary sort of people, vulgarly rich, and never recognized socially, but Miss Sally's personality seems to have assured her way for her. She and her aunt met Black abroad last summer, and the aunt was terribly impressed with him. I fancy she's far from cultured herself, and so took Edgar at his own valuation, and helped dazzle the girl with his achievements. As for him, he likes to be comfortable. He's really lazy, and, mark my words, when he's married her, he will let his writing go, and let her take care of him. He's incapable of really caring for any one; and, judging from what I saw and a few things she told me, he's trying to impress her equally with his great genius and her own insignificance and stupidity, so that the exchange may seem even—wealth for intellect and culture. That's the way he will bolster himself up to himself, if he has any qualms at all. Of course I'm largely guessing, judging by what I've seen and heard, and what I've known of him before. If ever a man needed a lesson given to him, and given good and hard—"

"Give it to him, old boy; we'll back you," Howells and Southworth cried enthusiastically.

Webster smiled and shook his head, but he fell into a deep study, his brows drawn together, his teeth clinched over his cigar. The other two watched him delightedly. This was a new rôle for Webster, hitherto invulnerably indifferent where women were concerned, and they were highly, though sympathetically, amused. After a few moments he looked at them searchingly, as if to be certain of their good faith.

"There is a way," he said thoughtfully, "a rather clever way, but you two will have to help me."

IV.

Two days later, Webster rang the bell of a huge gray stone house on the Lake Shore Drive. Miss Aishton was out, the butler told him, and then, whether he was pleased with the cut of the clothes which hung so well on Webster's tall, straight figure, or because he grasped this opportunity, which seemed intrinsic of some possible mischance to Edgar, whom all the servants cordially disliked, he added:

"She's just walked toward the park, sir—alone."

Surely enough, as he swung up the esplanade, he saw a little figure just ahead of him, valiantly battling against the wind, that swept down the long stretch of shore, and swirled and tossed the gray water over the stone work almost to her feet. Her hair was blown in wisps and ringlets of misty gold under her large, black hat, her cheeks were flushed pink, and her lips were bright with laughter as he joined her.

"Isn't it fun?" she cried. "I'm so glad to see you. How did you know it was I? I was wondering about you just this minute, wondering if you would really come to see us. This is jinks," as an incredibly ugly bull terrier came racing back to them, diverted from some excursion of discovery by the appearance of a stranger on the scene.

Webster suddenly felt very old. She was such a child, so naïve, so ingenuous. But almost immediately a quick change came over her flower-like face, and she turned it toward him with a little pucker of seriousness between her delicately drawn brows.

"I like to come out here whenever I can, but especially on a day like this, when there are no people about, and I can be all alone with the sky and the water. I seem to get to know myself better."

"Then I should certainly think you would like to come," he answered lightly.

She disregarded his implied compliment, though a dimple shadowed in her cheek gave it passing recognition.

"It makes me feel serious sometimes," she continued, "so small and insignificant, and all the things I care for when I am at home seem so little and insignificant, too. I don't suppose you ever feel that way, do you?"

"Indeed I do," he answered gravely. "Every one does at times"—he mentally excepted Edgar Black—"but you could never be insignificant; you mean very much to many people, I feel sure."

Her face clouded over.

"I'm afraid not," she said simply. "Of course, my aunt loves me, and I have many friends, but not close ones. I'm not clever, you know, and I hate to misjudge any one, but sometimes it seems to me that the only ones who care for me are the ones I can do something for; except Edgar, of course, and he has so much more to give that is worth giving than I."

She stopped, with a startled look, as if she had caught herself in the act of thinking aloud.

"Oh, you must think me very odd to talk to you as I have, when I hardly know you. Come, let's turn back, and I will give you some tea."

She was once more simply a light-hearted child, but Webster found it delightful to see her at the tea table, her small hands fluttering over the cups. He soon discovered that, naturally, she was bright, if not extraordinarily clever, but Edgar's insistence on her limitations had nearly accomplished all that her superficial education had not done to disguise it.

As he was about to leave, her aunt, Mrs. Brownell, rustled in upon them. She was a short, stout woman, to whom even the most exactly undulated of coiffures and the extreme of fashionable clothing failed to give an artificial appearance, so genuinely kind and good-humored was her infantile face. There was little of intelligence in her round, blue eyes, but so much of confiding ingenuousness that Webster's first thought on meeting her was of the simplicity of Edgar's task in producing on her the desired impression of himself.

He lingered a half hour or so after her coming, as her propitiation figured

largely in his scheme for the reduction of Edgar. It was not difficult for him to win liking under any circumstances, and when he in the least exerted himself success was inevitable; still, he was surprised when he had at last taken his leave, to have Mrs. Brownell follow him to the hall.

"I haven't said anything about it to Sally," she said, her manner betraying some little confusion, "but I would like very much to have you paint her portrait. She is engaged, you know, to Edgar Black." There was a note of pride in her voice. "And I would like to give the portrait to him for a wedding present. Would you—could you paint her for me? I saw the one you did of Mrs. Herbert Jones. It's just beautiful, and I decided then that I would rather have you paint Sally than even Zorn or Sargent."

Webster was distinctly amused, and yet grateful; not alone at her frank admiration of his art, but because the opportunity of painting Sally, for which he had hoped and had determined to ask, if necessary, had come with such incredible swiftness. It savored of a sympathetic understanding of his scheme on the part of Fate.

He suppressed a smile and drew his brows together, as if turning the matter over in his mind. He could hear Sally at the piano, singing a little air, as gay and sweet as herself. For a moment, a doubt troubled him. Was he wise in undertaking what he had? Would it mean good to either of them? But he brushed the thought aside. Sally was just as Edgar had said, a dear, delightful child, and deeply in love with another man, who really needed to be taught a proper appreciation of her.

Mrs. Brownell had been watching him anxiously. He realized that, to one of her type, difficulty in attaining an object made it all the more desirable, and he wished to make certain of this most fortunate chance.

"I have a number of commissions," he said at last, "but if it could be done at once, I might be able to paint Miss Aishton."

"Of course, we can begin at once,

if Sally consents, and I am sure she will," she said eagerly. "Then you will do it? I can let you know what Sally says in a day or two."

V.

The sittings were finally arranged for, and the next few weeks brought Sally to Webster's apartment constantly, sometimes with her aunt, sometimes with a maid. With every visit, Webster found his interest in his subject increasing. The sittings were usually in the afternoon, and often he would persuade her to linger for an hour—a rare book, some new sketches, or perhaps a cup of tea serving as pretexts for detaining her.

There was something in the atmosphere of his simple rooms, in the careless, informal good fellowship of his friends, who often drifted in, that brought out all the joyous youthfulness of the girl. She charmed every one with her naïveté and frank cordiality, and her regard for others' talents and her humility in regard to herself amused them, although they united in their efforts to make her feel as one of themselves.

They delighted in her voice, when Webster at last persuaded her to sing for him and them. It was small, but very sweet. Showy, difficult music it was utterly unfitted for, but there was a simplicity about her singing, a lack of effort, a tenderness and pathetic quality, which to a sympathetic audience made it exquisite, unforgettable.

Southworth and Howells were the most frequent visitors; in fact, it became almost a part of the sitting that they should wander in to offer comments and criticisms, and stay for an hour of gossip and badinage.

Sally's time was more than usually free, for Edgar was deeply engrossed in his new novel. He retained all the privileges of his engagement, however; the right to come and go when he chose; the right, if such it were, to patronize and admonish Sally. But as he was too absorbed in himself to think very much about her, he knew little of

what she was doing, and was slow, almost to stupidity, in observing the change which was gradually taking place in her.

The round of amusements with which she had before filled her days seemed to allure her no longer. She was not of a temperament to forego all frivolous occupation, but she slowly drew in the circle of her friends until her interests became more concentrated and she was able to extract something of a substantial nature from her relations with people. She was taking singing lessons, a fact which she carefully concealed from Edgar; and even Webster, to whom she confided many things, did not know that she was studying under the direction of tutors, in an effort to make herself more fitted to be Edgar's wife. She so explained it to herself, although she felt in a vague way that it was really Webster who was unconsciously stimulating her to effort.

In pursuance of their agreement with Webster, Howells and Southworth became her devoted friends, not a difficult feat, for their admiration for Sally became as great as their ever-deepening dislike of Edgar. They ingratiated themselves with Mrs. Brownell as well, and the house on the Lake Shore Drive began to see them and others of Webster's friends, who had seldom appeared in that fashionable neighborhood.

There was a simple friendliness about Sally and her aunt which appealed to those who would otherwise have considered them hopelessly philistine, and during the winter they entertained many of Webster's circle—men and women, who came, not because they were dined well, but because of a real interest in Sally.

Once or twice Edgar expressed surprise at meeting in this foreign atmosphere some one from the world he considered his own. Mrs. Brownell explained that they had been introduced by Webster, and her acquaintance with him as the outgrowth of a commission for a portrait of herself. Sally had suggested that her aunt should have it



Her profile revealed nothing to him, nor did her eyes, for she kept them bent on the little weed in her hand.

painted; the thought of giving up the pleasant hours she was spending in Webster's studio was not a happy one for her, and she grasped this opportunity to prolong them.

Webster, however, was unusually slow in finishing her own portrait; he lingered over the last touches, changing the background innumerable times, doing all he could conscientiously to delay its completion, but at last he was forced to tell her that it was practically finished.

Sally turned, and looked wistfully at the canvas. Webster had painted her sitting in a big, carved chair, a string of great pearls around her tiny throat, a soft, white gown clinging to her slender figure. It was an excellent likeness, but somewhat conventional and uninspired.

"It's very good," she said simply, "but I'm sorry—very sorry not to come again."

Webster shook his head.

"No," he said, "it's not good. It's you as you look to most people—not you as you really are. Look at this."

He quickly whirled about a canvas

that stood faced to the wall. She saw the figure of a girl clothed in a cloudy garment of pale green. Her hair, loosely flying in the breeze, was wreathed with flowers; flowers starred the grass at her feet, and she flung others into the air, her round white arms raised high above her head. The young green leaves in the background seemed to be rustling softly, the air was sunlit, the whole picture breathed the spirit of youth and spring.

Sally gave an exclamation of surprise, and then stood for a moment, mute before it. When she turned to Webster, her eyes were bright with tears.

"It's beautiful," she half whispered, "but it's—can it be me?"

"Yes," he said, "it's you, and youth, and everything—"

He paused. He had been about to add: "And everything that makes the world beautiful and life gracious and lovely." But he stopped himself, for, in a way, the words which came to his lips were as much a surprise to him as they would, if uttered, have been to her.

For the first time, he fully realized what she meant to him, for she meant truly all that, and much more. He stepped forward impulsively, and then stopped. He had no right to speak; his plans to induce in Edgar Black an appreciation of this priceless treasure had not included attempted theft on his own part. His feeling for Sally had changed very gradually, had merged from admiration and sympathy for a pretty child into adoration for the beautiful woman soul he had found to be hers, so unconsciously that he was both startled and dismayed at his discovery. The strength of his love and his anguish that it must be fruitless he realized later.

When he spoke his voice was husky, and he did not look at her.

"May I finish it?" he asked. "It is just sketched in from memory. I would like to have you pose for me once or twice, if you could."

"Oh, yes," she said eagerly, "I can. But, oh, how did you ever see me like that?"

His eyes grew tender as he looked at her, and the pain of not answering what he would hurt him very deeply.

"You inspired me," he said lightly. "It is my masterpiece."

VI.

Southworth discovered that he was deeply in love with Sally only a few days after Webster had received his revelation; but Southworth went straight to Sally, and told her so.

"All I ask," he concluded, "is that you let me dedicate these poems to you. They probably will never be published—few publishers seem to appreciate really good things these days—but I've written most of them since I've known you, and as you were my inspiration I want to dedicate them to you."

Sally's tender heart was touched, and she readily consented. She was quite human enough to be flattered, for the poems seemed to her wonderfully beautiful. They were, indeed, exquisite bits of workmanship; light in theme; for the most part full of the same joyous-

ness which Webster had caught in his picture, and yet slightly tinged with a sadness which Southworth declared inevitable, in view of his hopeless affection.

During the winter, a short story of Howells' appeared in which the description of its heroine unmistakably identified her with Sally. The accompanying illustration was sketched by a friend of his and Webster's from life, though without Sally's knowledge.

Edgar's attention was called to the story, but he impatiently rejected the possibility of Sally's connection with it, and declared it a mere coincidence. Southworth's poems, however, were published a few weeks later, and these he could not ignore, as they and their dedication were much discussed.

"What does this mean?" Edgar asked her one day, pointing to the slender volume in the artistic leather binding. "Why did you not consult me as to the propriety of this man's dedicating his poems to you?"

"You did not consult me as to the propriety of your making Miss Selwynne the heroine of your novel," Sally answered quietly.

Edgar looked at her in surprise. Never before had she retorted to a criticism. Where was the humble little Sally who had considered every word a gem of thought? He was filled with rage, but whether most with himself or with her it would be difficult to determine. He realized that he had been neglecting her, and giving other men opportunity for pleasure in her company; but, on the other hand, she should have respected the demands of his art, and recognized that it had the first and greater claim on his time.

"I do not like it," he said. "As my fiancée, it is in bad taste—extremely bad taste—for you to accept such conspicuous attentions from other men."

At which Sally wondered if she had been exactly loyal in concealing so much from him of late, and yet she was not quite certain that she felt any contrition for what she had done. She did realize, however, that, as her outlook had been enlarged, and her per-

ceptive powers developed through contact with other men of talent and ambition, Edgar had come to mean less and less to her. With a new self-confidence, a consciousness of her own ability to charm, and even to inspire men quite his equals, she had become as resentful of his attitude toward her as was possible for her gentle nature.

But this he failed to see, and though the admiration which he heard expressed for her with almost irritating frequency from sources which he respected as oracular, did give her an added value, he was still too self-engrossed to observe the complete revolution in her feeling for him.

VII.

In May, Webster's picture was exhibited; first at a series of private views and later publicly, because of almost clamorous requests. It was entitled simply "The Spirit of the Spring"; but it was recognized immediately as a portrait of Sally, and she and the picture became famous together. It was, as he had predicted, Webster's great picture. The critics were almost extravagant in their praise, and prophesied a brilliant future for him could he keep to the level he had found in it.

Could he—without Sally? Webster spent the greater part of his days, and his nights as well, in questioning himself; and his success was as nothing to him, when his heart cried out the answer. He had not seen Sally for weeks, not since the first day after the picture had been shown; he felt that he must not until he was more master of himself; but one day, as he came from a picture shop, she stepped from her motor brougham, and they found themselves face to face, making avoidance of her an impossibility.

"Oh," she cried, "I'm so glad to see you, though you have been very unkind to me lately. But I suppose you've been very busy, so I will forgive you—that is, I will if you will run away with me."

Webster looked at her, startled.

"Run away with you?"

"Don't be frightened," she laughed. "I was just longing to run away into the country for a few hours, but I had nobody to run with, and then I saw you. Will you come? I'm always like this the first few days of spring. I long to fly away from this horrid, grimy city to the fields and woods."

Again Webster had the feeling that fate had interfered, and he submitted recklessly, crowding prudent thoughts to the back of his mind. Sally dismissed her brougham, and they climbed the long stairway to the elevated station, each happy in the meeting, and full of the spirit of adventure. They rumbled over the noisy strife of the city streets, and so on to an electric line, and then out and away to the country, fresh with tender green.

They left the trolley at a deserted spot on the road, and as Webster heard the clang and whir of the receding car he felt almost panic-stricken. With people about them, his resolutions had seemed not impossible of keeping, but here, alone with her, he felt that he was fast slipping away from them.

Sally, however, seemed blithely unconscious of anything save the beauty of the day and the delight of living. They wandered through the fields, the young grass deliciously soft under foot, toward the lake, which lay, deeply blue and shimmering, in the sun beyond.

When they reached the bluff which overhung it, Webster spread his coat for her, and they sat down. Sally was quiet for a moment, her gaze far away. Then she turned to him, with a soft flush on her cheeks.

"Mr. Webster," she said, "I want to ask you about something; you know I have often consulted you about different things. You've always been very kind; and this is quite important to me."

"Yes?" he questioned.

She turned her face away, and pulled a dandelion from the grass. Then, with its little golden head between her fingers and her eyes thoughtfully on it, she said slowly:

"It's a strange question to ask any one, but you know I'm rather stupid"

—she brushed aside his negation—
“and I sometimes have to have help in thinking things out. Do you think, Mr. Webster,” with sudden resolve in her tone, “do you think that, when a girl is engaged to one man and finds that she is in love with another, it is fair for her to marry the one she doesn’t care for?”

He looked at her searchingly. Could she mean anything that affected him? His heart throbbed madly; but she would not look at him, and her profile revealed nothing to him, nor did her eyes, for she kept them bent on the little weed in her hand.

“No,” his voice was very low, almost breathless, “I do not.”

“Oh!” she said simply, with a little sigh as of relief.

He did not dare to say more, did not dare to run the risk which a possible misunderstanding of her might mean. She waited a moment, and then, all smiles again, she jumped lightly to her feet.

“Come,” she said. “I am afraid it is too damp for us to sit here, and I suppose we must be getting back to town. You will not thank me for keeping you away from your luncheon.”

They wandered on up the bluff together toward the nearest village, Webster watching her eagerly for some sign which would give him leave to speak; but instead she spoke of Edgar, and of his new book, and the sunshine seemed to fade from his world.

They had nearly reached the village, when they came upon a small grove of apple trees. With a cry of delight, Sally ran forward and pulled down a branch of the delicate blossoms. As Webster came up, she turned her head; she had taken off her hat, and her hair was blown about her face, while above

it was the mass of pink bloom. The violet depths of her eyes, the soft curves of her cheeks, her small, red mouth, and the bewitching dimple below in her rounded chin, made her irresistible.

“Sally!” Webster cried out, almost unconscious that he had spoken, utterly so of the yearning in his voice.

But she heard it, and, simply, as she did everything, she went straight toward him, and laid her two hands on his breast. His arms went about her closely, with a world of tenderness in their strength, and she raised her face and lips to his.

VIII.

Just at his dinner hour, which was inconsiderate on Sally’s part, Edgar received a note from her by a special messenger. He read it in the smoking room of the club, and as he read the stem of the glass which he held between his fingers was snapped in two, denoting no small measure of perturbation in a breast usually serenely complacent. The note ran:

MY DEAR EDGAR: In thinking it over carefully, it seems to me that it would not be quite fair to you for us to marry. I no longer care for you, but even if I did, it would not seem right to tie you to a wife whose companionship would so fail you of intellectual stimulus and inspiration. I have wanted to tell you this before, but you were so engrossed in your work that I really have had no opportunity. In the meantime, I have found that some one who is very dear to me and loves me, and I feel certain you will agree with me that it is happiest for every one to decide it in this way. In justice to Mr. Webster, I must tell you that our finding out that we cared for each other was quite accidental, and only after he knew that I should never marry you.

With best wishes for the success of the new book, I am,

Sincerely your friend,
SALLY AISHTON.





Chivalry

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY HY MAYER

DELIGHTFUL Daisy Jones,
Whose nature did demand it,
She felt it in her bones
She *had* to be a bandit.

But, since the courts had fined
Land-robbers such a *high* rate,
Sweet Daisy changed her mind
And vowed she'd be a pirate.

By stealth she stole a tug,
(Her father was a tugger)
And, dressed in pirate's lug,
Sailed forth to take a *lugger*.

Her crew were Alice Green,
And Tessie, Mae, and Mary,
All lovely girls—they'd been
Her friends at Seminary.

For seven days they sailed
And bandied prattle pretty,
Till by-and-by they hailed
The warship *Jersey City*.

The warship stood away
To blow the tug to Hades,
Till young Lieutenant Grey
Cried: "Hold, my men—they're *ladies*!"

So, midst excited din,
They soon cast off a dory
To bring these maidens in—
And here begins our story.

On deck they brought their prize
Observing each convention,
The captain cried: "Such eyes!"
The crew all stood attention.

The captain, full of years,
 (The rogue, he had a wife, sir!)
 Asked: "What d'ye want, my dears?"
 Gried Daisy: "Please, your life, sir!"

The crew in dress array
 They stood as calm as sphinxes,
 But the officer of the day
 Gried: "Tut—you little minxes!"

So Daisy drew her gun
 And aimed it very fealty,
 And with a shot—just one—
 Despatched the captain neatly.

Mae shot the bos'n plain,
 But Tessie took the pennant
 By popping out the brain
 Of Grey, the boy lieutenant.

The sailors muttered: "Hist!
 Your warlike manners vex, ma'am.
 We surely would resist
 If it wasn't for your sex, ma'am!"

But Daisy sniffed: "O fig!"
 And when she heard them grumble
 She locked them in the brig
 To make them meek and humble.

Then Daisy, Tessie, Mae,
 And Alice Green so rosy,
 They mopped the gore away
 And made the deck all cozy.

The chaplin's pipe they blew,
 Then while that good man tarried,
 They picked from out the crew
 Four heroes—and were married.

The moral of this, girls,
 Is: If you'd be a bandit
 Don't act or dress like churls—
 The men won't understand it.

Your hats, your gloves, your fluffs,
 Your hair the way you twist it
 With artificial puffs—
 What sailor can resist it?





IT was my pink coat that did it! Now, aren't you sorry you were so surly about my tailor's bill last fall?" Mrs. Lindsay Dwight, standing behind her husband's chair, her hands upon his shoulders, scanning the document which lay before him on the desk, executed a little triumphant *pas seul*. Lindsay looked up from the letter with some amazement.

"Your pink coat! What on earth do you mean, Mabel? What have your clothes to do with my receiving a commission from old Griggs to build out a wing on his place at Mt. Kisco?"

Mabel left her position, in which she could not command an impressive view of her husband's face, for one in front of the desk. She looked at him with an expression, roguish, amused, persuading. It conveyed affectionate reproach to Lindsay's density of perception, combined with a woman's toleration for all the shortcomings of the mere masculine as embodied in him.

"How often must I tell you, dearest," she began importantly, "that in your profession a wife counts for half the husband's success or failure? And as the wife's clothes count for half of her success or failure, it must be perfectly clear, even to you, that my pink coat deserves one-quarter of the fee which old Griggs will pay you for your work."

Lindsay stared at his wife in no wise enlightened by her mathematical calculation, but amiably ready to yield to her decision.

"I don't see it, puss," he said, "but have it your own way. The rose-colored coat is all right, any way, and I was a beast ever to intimate that Bernstein was a thief to charge you one

hundred and ten dollars for twenty dollars' worth of cloth, and two days' work."

Mabel elected to pursue the argument from an advantageous perch on the corner of the desk whence she was able to run an occasional finger across the lines beginning to form upon her husband's forehead.

"That isn't the way I want you to look at it, Lindsay," she said, with some earnestness. "You must not say a thing is right, because I do it, but you must say that I do it because it is right. In New York a woman has it in her power to ruin her husband's career if she doesn't—make good, I think you call it—socially. She has got to advertise his success, she has got to be a sort of runner-in for his business. Sometimes, I think, you have been inclined to criticise me for never neglecting the chance to meet the right sort of people—I mean the right sort from a professional point of view. Goodness knows," pursued Mabel, "it's no pleasure to me to waste my time at luncheons and teas, or gabbling here and there with a lot of women, when I might be with my old friends, or even at home reading a good book. But I do it for your sake. The people who build houses are the rich people. The men whom they employ as architects are those whom they know and like. My job is corralling clients, and I do it by means of such humble instruments as bright-colored coats and mink turbans. It was that combination worn at old Bauer's studio tea which first drew Mrs. Griggs' eye upon me. My natural charms," airily, "completed the work which my attire began. Mrs. Griggs came to luncheon. Her hands were thereby riveted the

faster. She brought him to dinner. He saw you—and there you are!”

Mabel's tapering finger indicated the letter on the desk from old Griggs, and she leaned forward to give her husband a kiss of entire approval of the happy outcome of the affair. In spite of the convincing logic with which she had spoken, Lindsay looked a little dubious.

“Hm!” he observed, frowning a little at some recollection. “It comes from you, then! Sometimes I am inclined to think I can scarcely afford such an expensive advance agent as you—no, dearest, I didn't mean that,” as Mabel, with an honestly hurt expression upon her piquant face, withdrew from his immediate neighborhood. “I truly didn't.”

“It was a very nasty thing to say,” replied Mrs. Dwight, with hauteur. “And, now, if you please, it is time for us to dress for Susie Morton's theatre party, or else have our dinner. Would you rather dress before or after dinner?”

“Susie didn't ask us to dinner, then? Oh, is that so, her table won't hold more than eight, and it was already filled? Don't apologize for your friend, my dear; I don't want to eat her dinner. I was just inquiring. As for ourselves, I suppose we dine on the remnants from last night's feast to the Cannons and Guilds?”

There were bright tears of annoyance in Mabel's eyes. “You talk as though the idea of using up the remnants of last night's dinner was something introduced into domestic economy by me when I try to entertain a little!” she exclaimed angrily. “I assure you both of our mothers did the same thing without entertaining.”

Lindsay laughed. “Now I have made her surely angry,” he confided to the walls as his wife flounced out of the room. “Don't be mad, Mab. I have been acquainted with hash from my earliest youth, and had no intention of accusing you of being its inventor. I will deck myself now for Susie Morton's festivity.”

When Mrs. Dwight rejoined her husband at the dinner table, the momen-

tary annoyance had faded from her face, and she was all smiles and sparkling, triumphant good humor. Never did seasoned war horse sniff the smoke of battle in anticipation with more joy than Mabel Dwight prepared for these entertainments which were part of her campaign in her husband's behalf. She was tremendously in earnest about the work of the true helpmate, as it is laid out for her in the Babylonish city. Her own mother had regarded her wifely duty done when the socks were mended and the house was made a place where a tired man might refresh himself after the strain and stress of the day.

Mabel, no less in love than her mother had been, no less conscientious about what she conceived her duty to be, would let the darning accumulate until it required the services of an expert seamstress to reduce the pile. She had more important work to do, she told herself, and her mother, and her sister, and her husband, and her friends. It was not, she stressfully assured them, any innate taste for frivolity which led her to be absent from her house some twelve out of every sixteen waking hours, but only an earnest desire to forward her husband's ambitions.

She was, she would have it understood, somewhat of a martyr to her sense of duty. Had she not almost ruined her digestion by a long course of tea and punch and sandwiches and cakes before she discovered that to partake of a salted wafer and a cup of hot water with lemon would cancel every obligation toward her hostesses' tea tables? Had she not nearly succumbed to nervous prostration, induced by want of sleep, owing to the unremitting conscientiousness with which she went to dinners, receptions, dances, and theatres? Could any one be so foolish as to suppose that she took these risks for personal pleasure? No, it was all a part of her duty as the helpful wife of a rising young architect.

If occasionally some old friend fancied himself snubbed, or herself neglected in the stress of Mabel's devotion to her duty—well, was not that an addi-



"Your pink coat! What on earth do you mean?"

tional martyrdom? Was she not the most cordial and warm-hearted of beings, and could anything be more painful to her than to wound, however inadvertently, those to whom she was attached? But, like the threatened nervous prostration and dyspepsia, this was one of the inevitable penalties exacted by her responsibilities.

That Lindsay, himself, had not always seconded her efforts or even seemed to approve them was but another thorn which she must bear as uncomplainingly as possible. Nevertheless, she would be more than human if she forbore to rejoice and triumph openly when circumstances proved her methods right, even to his skeptical eyes.

Lindsay disliked Mabel's doctrine. He hated to think that even in New York

anything counted in a man's career except his own talent, his own honesty, and his own willingness to work. Nevertheless, there were times, as for example, to-night, when his faith was obliged to waver toward Mabel's creed. At herself as a devotee of that creed he was always inclined to laugh a little. The dear girl was so obviously fond of society, so obviously fitted to grace it, that it was almost absurd in her to search beyond her own tastes for any reasons why she should pursue it.

Of course, she liked pretty clothes; of course, she enjoyed these luncheons and dances, and all the gay effervescence of life in the big city. Some day when he had won the place to which his talent and his equipment entitled him, some day, she should have all these things as natural rights, without being

obliged to salve her conscience with trumped-up reasons for them. Meantime, well, meantime, it was a little expensive. But perhaps it paid in the long run. The Griggs' instance seemed to be evidence in that direction, and certainly his fee from old man Griggs would more than pay for all the pink coats and mink turbans Mabel was likely to buy in several seasons.

So deeply was Lindsay impressed by his wife's joy in her little achievement, and so thoroughly did he enjoy the manifestations of her pretty triumph over him, that he could not bear to enlighten her, even when he learned the truth about the matter. That was four or five days later when he was at luncheon with Atwater, his old chief, in whose office he had served his apprenticeship to his profession.

"By the way," inquired Atwater, in the midst of the talk, "did Griggs, the cat-sup man, come to you about the additions to his place up in Westchester?" Lindsay nodded, alert and inquiring. "That's good," pursued Atwater. "He wanted us to give him an estimate, but I didn't see how we could do it now that we have won out in the St. Louis library competition. So I told him to go after you. I am glad

he did. He is a good old boy, but you want to look out for his wife. She will be making changes in the plans up to the very end, and afterward."

This conversation Lindsay forbearingly kept to himself, not repeating it to Mabel, even when she used the

Griggs' case as precedent and excuse for every sort of mild extravagance during the winter. But when it came to going to Southampton in the summer, instead of to the little, unfashionable resort on the Maine coast where they had met, and where they had been for every summer holiday since that first wonderful meeting, that was another matter.

"Why, Mabel!" exclaimed Lindsay, startled, and even hurt by her first timid suggestion that they should not spend July and August at Chebogue Neck.

"I know, dearest," Mabel struck in hurriedly and nervously. "I hate the thought as much as you possibly

can. Of course, there is no place on earth like the Neck, and never will be, and when you are rich and great enough to build a cottage there, and I am fine and fashionable enough to found a colony, then we will go there every summer of our lives. But, dear"—she took him wheedlingly by his coat



Mrs. Twombly Jones' enthusiasm took a slight drop.

lapels—"don't you see we are not in a position to do the things we want to yet? We have got to do what is best for your career! We can have Mrs. Cannon's cottage at Southampton for those two months, and who knows what it will mean for you? At the Neck, you're perfectly sure, before you go, that old Jed Herbert is not going to build a new hotel, and that the Proudis are not going to put a new farmhouse, whereas, Southampton is simply full of possible business. You really can't calculate beforehand what it may mean to you."

"That's right," replied Lindsay, with some bitterness. "One never can calculate beforehand what any mixing in with that set is going to cost him. I am perfectly sure it will be more than we can afford in any case."

"It's something we can't afford not to do," declared Mabel. "Now, do be guided by me in this, Lindsay," she went on, with an air of one endeavoring to help a man who is unwilling to help himself. "Surely you must admit that I am not a complete fool. I have helped you a little in getting ahead. Well, we never had an opportunity like this. The Cannons are going to be away, and they will let us have the cottage at a merely nominal rent. It will establish us, in a modest way, in that set. Remember the Griggses, Lindsay, and don't be pigheaded."

Lindsay, remembering the Griggses, was moved to relate the Atwater episode to his skeptical wife.

"Oh, very well," she said, looking at him with blazing eyes, after he had finished. "Do just as you please about it. Deny me any credit—it is a masculine habit, but one that I thought you were big enough not to have formed. But some time you may think of the fable of the lion and the mouse. I know I am not much—I am not clever and intelligent—I can't help you with your plans and ideas, but I did think—" Mabel's lips began to quiver, the blazing eyes to drown their angry fire in tears, and the slender shoulders to shake.

Lindsay gathered her up into his

arms, swearing that no man yet had such a helpmate in his wife, and the Southampton lease was as good as signed when he kissed away her tears. It was undeniable that the rental for the Cannon cottage was moderately small, and though Lindsay saw a long future in which Mr. Cannon and his wife would require free architectural advice in regard to all their relatives' establishments, and would expect him to provide work for all their protégés, he forbore to mention to Mabel that the price of the cottage was likely to be anything beyond that nominated in the bond. And watching her small triumphs and her large delight in them—a pretty, naïve, childlike delight that offended no one—he was almost ready to think, after the indulgent American husband habit, that the game was worth the candle. This leniency, however, seldom occurred on the dates when his mail consisted chiefly of a sheaf of monthly bills.

It was a glorious and victorious two months to Mabel, and it was followed by another two almost equally rapturous months of invitation to the country places of some of those whom she had met during the summer. Briefer and briefer grew the intervals of time which she had to devote to her old friends, even her visits to her mother's were somewhat curtailed. Occasionally, when Lindsay insisted upon it, or when the new acquaintances had not put in a prior claim, she made overtures toward the acquaintances of her less brilliant and hurried past. Quite often they were rejected, for Mabel's old friends were storing up animosity against her.

"Envious cats!" said Mabel to herself on days when she smarted beneath the inevitable perception that she was not popular in her former set. She tried to snap her finger, figuratively, at the thought of their disapproval. She tried to tell herself that she didn't need them, and didn't want them or their liking. She didn't succeed in pacifying herself very far, for she was a young person to whom universal approval, universal popularity, universal good

will, were almost indispensable. And when she balanced Mrs. Twombly Jones' smiles and patronage against her childhood chums' satirical glances and curt speech, she had her moments of waverings.

With the thought of Mrs. Twombly Jones she used to console herself between the moments of doubt and depression. Mrs. Twombly Jones—lucky woman—was the widow of two millionaires. Mrs. Twombly Jones was related to half the fortunes in the East. Mrs. Twombly Jones was great enough to choose whom she pleased for friends and rich enough to be suspected of no ulterior motive in her choice—so said Mabel. And Mrs. Twombly Jones has been pleased to give signal tokens of appreciation to the Lindsay Dwights. She had petted the pretty young woman whom she had met while visiting at Southampton, and she had invited them for a week-end in October to her place on the Hudson. Mabel had gone with swelling heart of ecstasy and an expensive week-end wardrobe.

It turned out to be a rather dull gathering of nondescripts with a Western bishop, growing deaf and absent-minded, as the only guest who could possibly be considered a person of importance. And Mrs. Twombly Jones had shown an inclination to monopolize Lindsay—a performance which tore Mabel's soul in twain. She was very far from being without natural jealousy, and Mrs. Twombly Jones, though more than forty summers' suns had set upon her, was renowned for her train of attachés.

Lindsay had tried to avoid being monopolized, which partly comforted and partly distressed his loving wife. Of course, he must not allow any antique notions he might have to offend the annexer of likable young men—he must not "lack tact," Mabel called it to her agitated mind, but at the same time, he mustn't, mustn't, mustn't let Mrs. Twombly Jones think she could annex him! Altogether it was an uncomfortable visit, and she was glad when she was back in town.

A week or so later, when, with due form, she invited Mrs. Twombly Jones to dine with them, the great lady had somewhat casually replied over the telephone that she was canceling all her engagements in town, and was off to the Hot Springs for her health. Her tone had given Mabel a moment's fear that Lindsay had proved really too antique in his behavior with the great lady. For a fortnight she devoted herself with assiduity to her relatives and her old friends. She did the mending herself, and marketed by the old-fashioned method of going out and seeing the provisions, instead of by the new-fashioned method of telephoning. She delighted her old circle, and filled her husband's heart with happiness during the period.

As the season advanced she began to get reminders of the summer—not quite the reminders she had hoped for. Few fashionables invited her and Lindsay to dinner, but ever so many of them sent her cards for conferences on suffrage to be held in their parlors. No one asked her to grace a box at the opening of the horse show or the opera, but she was asked to subscribe to numerous fashionable charities. Lindsay's commissions, in spite of the summer, were only an orphan asylum in Richmond and—coals of fire upon Mabel's head—a library at Chebogue Neck. The ladies who were building Italian palaces on Fifth Avenue, or, who were laying out French châteaux in the hills, were doing without her husband's assistance.

To add to her gloom at this time she overheard herself described in a street car—Lindsay had firmly shut down upon cabs upon receiving a livery bill the month before—as "a climber, my dear, a dreadful little climber." She longed to tell the woman exactly what she, Mabel, thought of her, and also to point out that she was "climbing" in a self-sacrificing spirit for Lindsay's sake. But, instead, she got out of the car as unobtrusively as possible at the next corner, and hoped, and prayed, that Clara Dooling had not seen her.

Filled with the burning desire to



Lindsay gave Mabel one look, as he politely took the memorandum from his guest.

prove to herself that Clara Dooling was merely a spiteful cat and not a truthful observer, Mabel redoubled her attentions to her old friends the next week. She invited Lindsay's sister to visit her, although Miss Dwight was merely a nice, plain, light-hearted young kindergartener from a small town. She arranged festivities for the girl, as though she were Mrs. Twom-

bley Jones' daughter—not that Mrs. Twombly Jones had any daughters.

Lindsay beamed approval and satisfaction around the dwelling, and Mabel conducted imaginary conversations with Clara Dooling, pointing out to her that it was perfectly possible for a large-hearted woman to increase her circle of acquaintances without excluding any of her old friends.

She arranged a little dinner for one night of her sister-in-law's visit—just a little, intimate, inexpensive dinner of the sort to which Lindsay had been accustomed in the first happy months of his marriage, before Mabel's idea of being a helpmate had developed so powerfully. Allen Rice was coming, and Mabel suspected that Allen had more than a momentary interest in Louise Dwight. The Grays were coming, Emma Gray having staidly declined to see any undue snobbishness in Mabel's career up to this time.

And when Mabel came in from her marketing, she found a telephone message from Lindsay announcing that he was bringing an additional college classmate home. Lindsay's classmates were a varied lot, and it had sometimes seemed to his wife that he possessed little power of discrimination among them. But to-day she did not care. No matter how dull or dreary or foolish the college mate might prove to be, the Grays would overlook it, and as for Allen Rice, he would never see it.

Everything was comfortably planned for the small festivity. The ferns and potted primroses which were already in the house were ample decoration for so modest an event. Jane, in the kitchen, could plank a steak to perfection; Mabel felt proudly that nowhere in the city could the superiority of her own salads be found. Louise had brightened into something positively pretty under the anticipation of the evening. At one o'clock, upon this state of peaceful preparedness, the telephone bell clanged harshly. Mrs. Dwight herself answered, to hear the voice of Mrs. Twombly Jones, the erstwhile charmer, at the other end. Mrs. Twombly Jones was back from the Hot Springs. She never had gotten over her disappointment of the night Mrs. Dwight had so kindly asked her to dinner, and she could not come, but could she not come to-night? Just informally, of course. And could she bring her cousin, Asa Brown, the big Boston architect? It might be advantageous to Mr. Dwight to know him, and it

would give Mr. Brown so much pleasure to meet Mr. Dwight! Of course, if Mrs. Dwight was having any one, or going anywhere—

Mrs. Dwight hastily disclaimed any engagement "that mattered," as she added, to salve a conscience not yet entirely liberated from early bondage to the truth:

"Lindsay is bringing a man home to dinner." But at that joyful news Mrs. Twombly Jones was sure it would be "all the jollier," and declared that she would come "perfectly informally, of course."

Mabel then somewhat diffidently mentioned her sister-in-law, and Mrs. Twombly Jones' enthusiasm took a slight drop. Still, if it would not make any trouble she would love to see her dear Mabel again, and her dear Mabel's husband before she went away for the winter. And so it was arranged.

The next hour was one of the busiest of Mabel's social career. In fact, all the afternoon she was more or less feverish. It was the first time that the career of self-sacrificing helpmate had ever obliged her to lie deliberately, and she did not make a great success of her preliminary canter in falsehood. Furthermore, she felt perfectly sure that while Emma Gray, to whom she had telephoned, had sympathized with the sudden, blinding headache which was to postpone the evening's festivity, she had at last joined the tribe of her critics.

When she had frantically insisted that Lindsay should substitute for the person of no importance whom he was bringing home that night, one more likely to prove amusing to Mrs. Twombly Jones, she had the satisfaction of feeling that her husband's unswerving admiration for her had begun to crumble at the edges under the disintegrating influence of the critical spirit. Lindsay stubbornly refused to help her by suggesting any other man to take the place of the one whom he was bidden to shelve for the night, and was extremely annoyed when Mabel, in desperation, insisted that he should try to get Waters.

"He is such a raconteur and goes

everywhere; he is a constant diner out, and I dare say Mrs. Twombly Jones knows him," declared the poor little climber.

At that Lindsay almost resorted to open rebellion, but the flood of tears in Mabel's voice at the other end of the wire prevailed.

"How can you be so horrid when I have so much to do?" she wailed. "You don't think I am doing this for my own pleasure, do you?"

As for Louise, when she learned that Allen Rice was to be postponed, she almost stated her intention of refusing to grace the feast herself; but she, too, succumbed to her pretty hostess' distress, and in half an hour she was doing her part manfully, by dashing to the florist in a cab for flowers for the table, and by interviewing the caterer on the subject of ices, while Mabel, at the waitresses' agency, was insisting that she did not want the one she had last April, and at the tobacconist's was frantically trying to remember which brand of cigarettes Mrs. Twombly Jones affected.

Added to these slight drawbacks to peace, Jane, in the kitchen, was moved to entertain the darkest doubts as to whether the squabs could be properly broiled unless something was done to the pipes of the gas stove; and at the very eleventh hour, when Mabel was trying to conciliate her husband by laying out his dress clothes, and generally making his transformation into an agreeable host as easy as possible, she discovered that he did not have a dress shirt in the house which was fit to wear, all the good ones being, apparently, at the laundry, and those which were home having a choice collection of rough cuff edges and yawning stud holes.

Lindsay, arriving in a surly mood, thought that he was keeping the law of his agreement with his wife "not to be nasty" when he refrained from telling her in so many words exactly what he thought of her behavior. He announced gruffly that Waters, the incomparable raconteur, would appear duly at seven-thirty, and he added pleasantly,

that Waters was a conceited ass, whom he regretted being obliged to ask into his house. Mabel cast a reproachful glance at him, but repressed her lips from a reply; and, fixing her thoughts firmly upon Asa Brown and the advantage it would be to Lindsay to know him, arrayed herself in her most magnificent dinner gown, and awaited her guests.

At seven-forty-five, arrived Waters, an anecdote upon his lips almost before he had greeted his hostess. At seven-fifty, arrived Mrs. Twombly Jones, but without the great Asa Brown in tow. Instead she had with her a youth of some twenty-two summers, who she airily and none too quietly explained to Mabel was one of her "useful little cubs; really a dear boy, though—you will love him. Asa was so sorry not to come. He was here for a dinner at the New York Chapter of Architects to-night; I didn't know that when I telephoned you. What a quaint old apartment this is, so much nicer than modern ones! An old place made over, isn't it? Your folding doors are mahogany, aren't they? You won't mind my looking like a scrub when you are so pretty? My woman opened the wrong trunk, and it was too late for her to unpack another, and I knew you wouldn't mind—such an informal little dinner."

At dinner it appeared that the useful little cub was to be taken into Lindsay's office—such was Mrs. Twombly Jones' benevolent intention—as a draughtsman. Furthermore, it developed that she had no particular use for Waters. She yawned at his stories.

"I have heard them all before," she confided to Mabel afterward, in the drawing-room. "People stopped asking him around three or four years ago, because he would not learn any new ones. Of course, I don't blame you for having him, if he is an old friend or something of that sort."

She capped the climax of the evening, however, when the men came in from the dining room by saying frankly that she had some memoranda in the pocket of her cloak—some improve-

ments and the like, which she would like to have Lindsay cast his eye upon, with the view to giving her a point or two as to how to alter her hall at The Beeches. It was, she explained, nothing really worth consulting an architect about—the local builder could manage the changes, and any one so clever as Lindsay could see exactly what was needed in three minutes. She just wanted him to give her enough of a hint to prevent that local builder from doing anything too atrocious.

Lindsay gave Mabel one look, as he politely took the memorandum from his guest.

Mabel's hair was Puritanically brushed back from her forehead and plaited into two rather unbecoming pig-tails, which fell down the back of a severe and unbecoming negligée of gray flannel. Her face was very pale, ex-

cept where it was very red from tears. She had found some secret nook in the apartment, where she could have it out with herself, and she now made her appearance before her husband, clad as literally as possible in sackcloth and ashes.

"Lindsay," she began, controlling her voice with an effort, "to-morrow morning I will go to Emma and tell her all the horrid truth. I will go to everybody and tell all of them all the horrid truth. I have been a wretched, vulgar, little snob and pusher and climber. And I have also been"—Mabel's lips quivered hard—"a colossal—lit-tle fool."

But the last word was smothered by the embrace of the forgiving Lindsay. So little are they punished according to their just deserts who are pretty enough to defy even the effect of tightly braided hair and gray flannel dressing gowns!



THE RHYMESTER'S COMPENSATION

NO poet I! Think not I live
 By elegies and pæons
 Whereby true poets manfully
 Have paid their bills for æons.
 Great poets seem to live on less
 Than common mortal's need;
 And little poets starve, I guess,
 Or sell their prose for feed!
 But rhymesters rhyme in hours of play
 And boil the pot some other day.

No poet I! Think not I yearn
 To rank with the Immortals,
 To leave behind the beaten path
 And penetrate Fame's portals.
 My letters not a soul will read—
 However passion-red—
 Except the sweethearts I address;
 But poets, who are dead
 Have all their golden love laid bare,
 And bartered in the public square.

ELIZABETH NEWPORT HEPBURN.



ILLUSTRATED BY H. HAYGARTH LEONARD

MILLY BENSON, standing on the top of the steps, saw her rival turning the corner of the block, and caught her breath, viewing those charms which were, slowly but surely, winning Dick's heart away from her.

"And she's like me—like me, only so much better," grieved poor Milly.

She felt that this should not have been. Literature, as Milly knew literature, coyly revealed in the pages of the *Fireside Friend*, always gave the blonde as rival to the brunette. And Sally was of her own complexion.

As she drew nearer, the likeness, striking at a distance, dissolved in a host of minor differences. Milly's locks were dark and abundant, but Sally's boasted the gloss of satin, and waved, to boot. Milly's eyes were hazel and soft; Sally's could have been likened to those of the traditional gazelle. Milly was neither short nor too plump, but Sally's lithe, svelte form justified her position as cloak model in Twenty-third Street—in the very establishment that relegated Milly to the hosiery department. No one could find fault with Milly's features, but Sally's reminded the beholder of the Clytie. To sum up, Milly had a good complexion, but Sally's made you think of sun-kissed roses, dew-touched lilies.

"You're home ahead of me," Sally

smiled as she passed Milly, to enter the house.

"I don't dawdle, talking with the clerks," Milly flung over her shoulder.

"They won't let me by," drawled Sally, conscious of superior charm. "Well, if I'm not to keep Mr. Norris waiting all night, I must hurry."

She disappeared in the house. Milly felt her whole form stiffen. He was to take her out again, then.

"He likes her—he really does," ran her burning thoughts. "And—before he saw her—he nearly spoke—to me—he nearly did."

Her errand at the delicatessen store accomplished, she retraced her steps. It had always seemed to Milly an added link in the chain of bitterness, which of late had bound her soul in a dark prison of fear and hopelessness, that Sally should occupy, with her adoring mother, the ground-floor flat of that Harlem apartment house, in which she and her aunt rented two rooms from the tenant on the top floor. It was hard, too, that the aunt, with whom circumstances forced her to live, should not only not adore her, but regard her—the child of a brother who had died in her debt—with a dull, insistent dislike.

Milly, carrying rolls, ham, and tea, lifted her heavy eyes as she reached the steps. There, lounging against the

railing, waiting for Sally, stood Dick Norris—cool, clean, trim, alert, well-dressed, good-looking, the dandified young bookkeeper of the Twenty-third Street store.

Milly's heart throbbed with a painful joy. She would fain have missed the meeting. She hated to acknowledge his presence at that house, not calling on her, but on another. To face him seemed to make explicit the fact of his desertion. So long as their relations were tacitly unchanged, there existed a possibility of their resumption.

But the scarlet flush on Dick's fair face forced recognition. He did well to blush, for he owned a conscience, and it was by no means at ease regarding Milly Benson. He had so admired her till an errand took the new bookkeeper to the cloak department, to rectify an error in a "charge" account; and there he had seen those dark charms multiplied a hundred fold!

"Good evening," he stammered. "Say, can't I carry those up for you?"

A proud refusal trembled on Milly's lips. Then there flashed upon her mental retina a vision of Sally looking for her caller. The joy, ephemeral though it must be, was real.

"If it's not too much trouble," she said.

"Why, a pleasure," exaggerated conscience-stricken Dick, taking her parcels.

Milly's whole being throbbed to his nearness on the long ascent; to the touch of his hand at her elbow, when the stairs turned dark and dangerous corners.

"Won't you come in?" They were on the top landing now.

Her eyes besought him wistfully. In the dimness, her face took on a soft beauty, foreign to it in a more garish light. His old liking returned upon him, for a brief space. He felt her tenderness enwrapping his soul. Her sadness, too, accused him. He knew too well its cause, and a sudden relenting of remorse dulled, for a moment, the remembrance of Sally's brilliant loveliness. She was hard and cold, teasing and exacting. Milly pleased and

soothed. Ah, but Sally fired his blood; she had all the lures of coquetry at her fingers' ends. Milly aroused no hunter's instinct. Yet, there, with her sad eyes beseeching him, he could not turn away, leaving her pain uncomfortable.

Neither could he stay. Sally awaited him below; might exact stinging toll for these moments of delay. He sought for some sop of satisfaction to fling to Milly, as her spirit clung to his, hindering, delaying him.

"No, I can't come in now." He spoke jerkily. "But we might make a date, mightn't we? Is any one taking you to the Wood Builders' dance next Thursday? No? Then, might I have the pleasure? Good night."

He ran down the stairs, two at a time, feeling he had earned his discharge. Sally, at the open door, awaited him. She was in fleckless white from veil to shoes.

"Well, upon my word!" She regarded him with a real displeasure. "I thought an earthquake had swallowed you up!"

"Why, no." He was ill at ease. "Fact is, I just met Miss Benson, and had to carry up her packages. Shame these houses don't have an elevator. Shall we start?"

"Sally!" Her mother came from the inner room with a light wrap. "Take this; a breeze may blow up. Don't let her catch cold, Mr. Norris."

"I won't," Dick answered, over his shoulder. "Now, Miss Becker! Why didn't you let me help you down those steps?"

But she was intrenched in a coy coldness, and had to be wooed to geniality. As he was bending to her, paying his tribute of pleading explanations, Milly, from the fire escape, watched them.

Yet her heart heaviness was lifted. Through three golden days—Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday—she could look forward to Thursday night. Oh, she must look her very best; she must!

"You take long enough to go on a message," came, in a grumbling monotone, from the bent figure at the stove. "I've lost relish for my supper, waiting for it. And where's the frying

pan? You never do put anything in its right place. I hunted this morning for a full hour."

The dull stream poured on unceasingly. Milly was no longer even irritated, much less hurt. Custom had injured her to this constant blame. Only one note had yet the power to sting; and, presently, as the two women faced each other at the little supper table, this note was struck.

"If I'd 'a' kept my money, 'stead o' mortgaging my little home, and lending your father the money——"

"I'm paying it off as fast as I can," Milly's answer was patient, with the thousandth repetition. "And you're at no expense for living."

"You got that new hat this spring, when the old one was plenty good enough," grumbled her aunt.

But Milly did not heed her. Hope was slowly returning. Dick would take her, not Sally, to the dance. Would Sally go at all? True, she was a girl who never lacked a beau; but they had held back of late, since Dick's attentions had become so marked. If she didn't go! Milly knew well how much better she herself looked, when her girlish prettiness was not subjected to the damaging comparison with Sally's superior reproduction of that prettiness.

When she had washed the dishes, always under a monotonous fire of blame and admonition, she took down her one white suit—worn now for its second season, and showing the strain of even her careful laundering. Fashion demanded white, and the Chinaman was not content with his sinful price; he

ruined your garments, too. It behooved you to do your own washing and ironing, if you had to make them last.

As she bent over the little holes, carefully darning them, she wished she could have had something lighter than linen. No doubt Sally—if she went—would wear Persian lawn, or something soft and sheer. But the mortgage took every penny not demanded by the simplest living, and she could afford nothing new.

Toward the end of the evening, she



Lounging against the railing, stood Dick Norris.



"I haven't given Mr. Norris any answer yet."

put her work down, and stole to the first floor. She was ashamed, in her heart, of her errand. But the smart of her jealousy, combined with the clamor of that new hope for sustenance, rendered imperative her burning thirst to know how Sally and Dick parted.

At last they came. She could hear, from the second-floor landing, to which she retreated, the sound of Sally's care-free laugh—and Dick's deeper merriment. The merriment changed into anxiety, though, when he spoke.

"And you'll come, Sally? Do say you'll come?"

"Well, you have the nerve to ask me," Sally's reply came, punctuated by laughter. "I'm not often asked by gentlemen, let me tell you, to go along with them and their best girls!"

"But I told you how it was," Dick's voice was pleading. "As to talking of my best girl! *You* know——"

Poor Milly fled upstairs, in terror of what she might hear. So he had asked Sally, too. Then Sally might go. She herself would not—no, no, no!

All through the long, hot night, she lay and panted upon her tiny cot bed, listening to her aunt's heavy breathing. Yet, in spite of the disclaimer she had vowed the night before, when she rose she washed the white linen suit, and hung it out on the fire escape to dry before she went to work.

All through the day she took eager count of the times that Dick—often forgetting to look her way—passed the hosiery counter en route to the elevator. He seemed gloomier upon each return from the cloak room. Oh, if Sally did refuse to go! If she herself could have him to herself for one long evening, what might she not win back? If she could look her very best, unspoiled by Sally's proximity, oh, he might—might "speak!"

She was among the salesladies detained to help in the changing of the counters and "circles" that night, and the little entry was nearly dark when she reached her home.

On the top stood Mrs. Becker, peering into the dusk.

"Come in, dearie, and lie down. You must be so tired, being fitted after standing all day with them cloaks on."

"I'm not your daughter, Mrs. Becker," interrupted Milly, with a short laugh. It always annoyed her to be mistaken, as she occasionally was, for her beautiful rival.

"Why, I see *now* you're not!" laughed the mother. "She's gone to be fitted; that dressmaker is away behind with her pink dress. There she comes!"

Milly's heart was hot with envy. Envy of Sally's looks, of her pink dress—these melted away before envy of Sally's mother. To be met with this tender care when you came back from your work!

She lingered now as Sally rather languidly mounted the steps. For days Milly had not spoken to this bane of her life, but now she must know more of the new garment.

"I hear you're getting a new dress—pink?" she hazarded.

Sally leaned against the doorpost of her own room, throwing her arms above her head—a free and beautiful gesture, which showed her figure to the best advantage. Her eyes sparkled with malice as she replied:

"Yes—for the dance Thursday. That is, *if* I go. I haven't given Mr. Norris any answer yet."

Milly essayed to match the insolence of her rival's tone.

"Has he asked *you*? When? He begged me to go, Monday night, just before he took you for a walk."

Sally's laugh rang out, and Milly turned scarlet at her own false and futile boast.

"Begged you, did he? Begged you so hard you couldn't say 'no'? That's what he's been doing to me, every time he sees me. *I've* kept him guessing. I suppose you were kinder, and put him out of his misery at once?"

Mrs. Becker had withdrawn. The two girls faced each other, alone in the dingy entry. From the despair which filled Milly's heart at Sally's gayety—gayety which could only be inspired by the certainty of Dick's love—rose a desperate resolve. The girl came forward, and spoke in a low, strained whisper:

"Miss Becker! Tell me—do you care for him?"

Sally drew herself away.

"I guess that's my business—and his," she answered haughtily. "You've a nerve to ask it."

"No—don't go in," panted Milly. "Listen to me. Do you want him so—so that you feel you'll drown if you don't get him? Do you want him so



She tore first the skirt and next the waist into strips.

that you can't think of a thing else, all day, and can't sleep at nights? If you do, then get him if you can. If you don't, if he's only one of the fellows that give you a good time, only *one*—then, give me a chance! Give me a chance—and don't come on Thursday."

"You've *had* your chance." Sally's words cut into Milly's quivering soul like steel. "You knew him first, and couldn't keep him. You've had your chance and—lost!"

She turned into her own room, shutting the door. Milly went up the long stairs slowly, pausing on each dim landing.

Her aunt, looking up at her entrance, began to speak. Then the dull stream ceased—for wonder at the girl's actions.

Crossing to the peg on which hung her white linen suit, Milly seized the garments with trembling hands. Then, with nervous strength, she tore first the skirt and next the waist into strips, and tossed them on the floor at her feet.

"Now I can't go! Now I can't!"

"Milly Benson!" Her aunt looked at her, almost with fear. "Are you out of your mind—*clean*?"

Milly made no reply. She ran into the inner room, and flung herself on the little cot, her face buried in the pillows. So she lay, motionless, till the old woman, still with fear at her heart, crept quietly to bed.

Wednesday and Thursday passed by, charged with electric meaning to the girl, whose subconscious self alone served customers at the hosiery counter. Her eyes were usually fixed on the glass door leading to the bookkeeper's department, or else following Dick wistfully on his way to the elevator. Occasionally he would glance toward her, and nod or smile; but, more often, as she knew, she was nonexistent for the man whom Sally was "keeping guessing."

As Milly left the store on Thursday night, Dick lifted his cap to her, and spoke:

"I'll come for you and Miss Becker at eight-thirty, in a hack. Seeing the

dance is on One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, I can spread myself, you know."

He wondered uneasily—having that conscience—if she could divine that he meant to ask a friend to take her home, leaving himself free for Sally. So he did not notice her curious, blank expression as he turned away.

"If I hadn't torn it—I'd have gone," she moaned to herself, as she toiled up the steps to the "El."

The entry was dim, as usual. Milly was glad that Mrs. Becker, standing with her back to the door, did not see her, and again mistake her for Sally. Some one had done that at the store to-day, in a dark corner, and Milly had felt a pang of anger at the "Oh!" uttered when the clerk and she moved into a lighted space.

Milly struggled with a curious distaste of the "home" on the top flat, as she neared it. To-night it seemed as if the dull stream of complaint could no longer be endured. Outside her own door, she turned, and wandered aimlessly downstairs again, reaching the entry in time to observe Mrs. Becker walking to the end of the block.

A little breeze came wooingly into the shabby house. Milly took off her hat, and leaned toward it gratefully. Then, as she lingered, a boy with a big box came up the steps, searching the door for a number, his face puckered with anxiety.

"Oh, there y'are, lady," he cried happily, at sight of Milly. "Glad I saw you. Mother's awfully sorry she's so late. Here it is." He handed her the box.

The pink dress! Milly clutched it, and he turned away, not waiting for payment, she noticed. Yes, he ran off, in the opposite direction from that taken by Mrs. Becker.

"So *he* thinks I'm like her, too." Milly's lip curled in bitterness. "And I'm to wait here, and give Miss Becker her pink dress!"

She flung the box down.

"Well, I guess I won't! I wish some one would come along and *steal* it, before she knew it had come."

As the thought crystallized into words in her mind, the girl stopped. She looked about her; no one, though many were passing the door, seemed looking her way. She stooped, seized the box, and swiftly ran upstairs.

Her aunt's back was to her, as she entered. She crossed on tiptoe to the door, and put the box on her own bed.

All through the supper, at which she did not once speak, her mind was busy with the picture of Sally—perhaps even in tears—at the nonarrival of her dress. Oh, to recall that mad destruction of her only possible garment. Fate had given her the chance Sally had denied her. For some instinct told her Sally would petulantly refuse to go in any but the new dress.

She rose from the table, and sought her treasure. Where should she hide it? In the morning it would be easy to put it in the hallway. But, for to-night, it must be stowed away.

A burning desire to see it made her, at length, carefully untie the string. She caught her breath as she pulled off the lid.

It was only a simple dress, of some soft, sheer fabric, made with a yoke of white lace. But the color! That was a delicate shell pink, taking deeper shades where one fold fell upon another. Milly turned it this way and that, feasting her eyes upon the brightness that made a glow of radiance in the poor little room, like that of an exotic on a heap of dust.

With shaking fingers, she took off her black skirt and cheap lawn waist. Then, shudderingly, with a backward glance at the door, she arrayed herself in the glory of the stolen finery.

How it transformed her! How the color brought out unsuspected tints on cheek and lip, and threw up the darkness of her hair and eyes.

Then madness entered her soul. She would wrest this night from Sally, since



She caught her breath as she pulled off the lid.

Fate had given her the chance. She bathed her burning face in cold water, arranged her hair, throwing a towel over the lace yoke. It was a trouble that her rain coat would not quite hide the skirt, but she must choose a moment when the hallway was empty, and slip out, meeting Dick on his way to the scene of the night's gayety.

Alas! Fate deserted her, after luring her to the pathway of the transgressor.

The rosy gleam of her skirt caught the old woman's still keen eyes as Milly left the room. It took her just so long to realize that her niece had wasted more money in unneeded finery, as it took Milly to gain the first floor. And she followed the girl down the stairs, reaching the first-floor landing, just as Milly had shrunk back, in dire alarm, confronted at once by Dick and Mrs. Becker.

"No, Mr. Norris; she says to tell you she won't go out to-night, thank you." Thus Mrs. Becker, agitated.

"Won't she see me?" pleaded Dick; but there was a touch of resentment in his tone, too.

"No, she won't see you, she says," Mrs. Becker answered dolefully.

Dick turned away, biting his lip.

Then he caught sight of Sally on the landing above.

"Glad *you're* ready, Miss Benson." He made a brave effort at cheerfulness, though he was vowing that *never* would he try taking out two girls again. "I've got the hack. We'd best start."

"Milly! Milly Benson!" called her aunt from above. "You come right back. You tell me what you mean by getting a new dress, a pink dress, when that mortgage——"

"Aunt! Go back! Go back!" Milly whispered shrilly. "I'll tell you when I come back."

But, at the words "a pink dress," Mrs. Becker turned.

"A pink dress!" she cried eagerly. "Oh, Miss Benson! Do you *think* the woman sent you Sally's by mistake? Did a *boy* bring yours? Maybe it's Sally's, after all."

Between the devil and the deep sea, Milly came from her aunt's pursuing tongue. Her idea was to make a bold dash, and secure the safe shelter of the hack—and Dick!

"No mistake, no mistake!" she said breathlessly, and hurried down. "I'm ready, Mr. Norris."

"But that's Sally's *goods*!" shrieked Sally's mother, seizing the rain coat, and forcibly unfastening it. "Why, you wicked girl! This is Sally's dress!"

Before the half-hearted disclaimer she was framing could pass her lips—for Milly was a coward—the girl's fear changed to the stony dullness of despair. Sally herself, in a long white wrapper, her hair, in two night-black braids, falling below her waist, appeared at the doorway.

"Sally!" Mrs. Becker, no longer a mild and gentle old woman, but changed by her daughter's wrongs into one burning flame of mother wrath, pointed an accusing finger toward Milly. "Look at that!"

Sally looked, and her eyes burned into Milly's.

"What does all this mean?" demanded Dick, looking from one to the other of the claimants for his fickle heart. "I see, Miss Becker, you didn't *mean* to go."

And his eyes wandered from Milly's rose-hued splendor to Sally's negligée.

To an artist, Sally was still incomparably the more beautiful of the two. But Dick was no artist; his æsthetic faculties had long been trained only by cloak-room ideals. To him, Milly was "dressed," and Sally was not. He looked admiringly at the girl who adored him, with a sudden appreciation of that adoration.

"What does it mean?" Mrs. Becker, to answer him, laid her hand upon his arm, and drew him aside. Into his ear she poured a bewildering account of dressmakers' iniquities, boys' blunders, which left him entirely in the dark. While she spoke, the old woman on the floor above withdrew, satisfied of vengeance, and Sally swept over to Milly, her eyes flashing up and down the girl's shrinking form, until her scorn found words.

"You—*thief*!"

She whispered the words, but they sufficed. Milly suddenly visioned herself in the police wagon, in the police courts, in prison! Her body was still erect, but her soul knelt to the girl she had wronged.

"I haven't hurt it! I'll take it off!" she whispered back.

And then a strange thing happened!

Some hidden vein of gold in Sally's heart, long covered by the crust of self-love, self-pleasing, was touched by that despair and shame. A swift rush of pity, of tenderness, stirred in her, to meet the prayer for mercy which spoke to her out of Milly's eyes—so humbly. She caught the trembling hands in hers.

"You *poor* girl! It's not to me what it is to you. Take your chance!"

"Mommy, dear," she called sweetly, "what *are* you talking about? I'm not the only girl in the world can have a pink dress!"

She ran over to her mother, pushing her gently into the room. Then she faced Dick.

"No, sir." She tossed her head superbly. "One girl's enough for any man! Good night!"

And Dick turned from the smart of her scorn to Milly's healing love.



"Frank, if anything happens to me, will there ever be any one else?"

The Craftiness of Aunt Carrie

By Temple Bailey

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

THE doctor came straight from the sick room into the kitchen. He was tired, and the odor of wet feathers, the steaming pan, the red-faced, anxious old women who bent over it, got on his nerves.

"She'll die," he said brutally, "if you can't get her roused."

The red faces grew white. Then old Mrs. Stoeffer quavered: "We killed the old hen. We thought she might like some chicken broth."

Her sister jerked the last handful of feathers from the fowl's bare white skin. "She won't eat anything."

"She's pretty sick." The doctor's tone was gentler. They were such poor old souls.

The mother sighed. "She can't get over the baby's death."

"Well, she ought to think of Frank," Aunt Carrie said grimly, "but she don't. She just thinks of herself, and how,

if she dies, Frank will spend the rest of his days settin' under that dogwood tree in the cemetery, cryin' for her."

"Carrie!" Mrs. Stoeffer's voice was shrill with reproach.

Aunt Carrie, wiping the tears from her hard cheeks with the back of a wet hand, defended herself. "I love her as much as you do—but just lovin' her ain't goin' to make her well."

"Taking her mind off of herself will help." The doctor picked up his bag. "She's decided that she can't get any better, and that's enough to kill her."

As he went out, Mrs. Stoeffer, still clinging with a sort of desperate faith to her belief in the efficacy of diet, murmured: "If she'd only eat something!"

At the gate, the doctor met Carabel Cummings. She was a tall, fair girl, with red-gold hair. In her hand she carried a covered bowl.



"She'll die," he said brutally, "if you can't get her roused."

"I thought I'd bring Lena a custard," she explained. "She's pretty sick, isn't she?"

"She's goin' to die." His voice floated back to the kitchen.

"Oh, don't!" the girl protested, and hurried past him.

When she came to the sobbing old women on the step, she cried: "I think he's horrid to say such things."

"Well, it's true, ain't it?" Aunt Carrie asked.

"Maybe. But he didn't have to say it. Can I go right in?"

"Yes. Frank's with her."

It was cool in the dim, dark dining room, and in the parlor beyond, where the sick woman's bed had been brought, that she might look straight out upon the shadowy orchard, and on the hill, crowned by the country church.

Carabel bent over the bed. "How are you, dear?" she whispered.

Lena, lying with closed eyes, groped

with wavering fingers for the hand of her friend.

Carabel took them in her warm clasp. "I've brought you a custard," she said.

A faint shudder shook the sick woman. "No," she breathed.

From the other side of the bed, her young husband bent over her. "Now, honey," he coaxed, "you eat it." "No."

The man straightened up. "You see," he said, "she won't."

Carabel sat down on the foot of the bed. "You oughtn't to act so." Her voice held a note of impatience.

The young man stopped her with a quick gesture. "Please don't blame her. She'd eat it if she could, wouldn't you, honey girl?" And at his words his wife opened her eyes, and, almost triumphantly, smiled up at him.

Carabel flushed. With the red in her cheeks, she seemed to typify bloom, as the girl on the bed seemed to typify decay.

"Of course," she said, "if you feel that way——" She stopped, and took up another subject. "Elder Morse asked me to tell you to come over to the meeting, Frank."

"Why?"

"They're going to have special prayers." She glanced at Lena, who lay motionless, with closed eyes. "For her," the girl's lips formed silently.

The young husband knelt beside the bed.

"Honey girl," he whispered, "you won't mind if I go over to church."

"With Carabel?" Her glance flashed from one to the other.

"Yes. They're goin' to have prayers—for you——" His tears were wet against her hand. "Seems as if I'd like to pray with them."

"It won't do any good."

"Lena," Carabel flamed, "don't talk that way!"

"Why not?"

"Don't you see how you are hurting—Frank?"

"Hush!" the man protested, and bent over his wife, and again her eyes met his with that look of triumph.

When they had gone she lay very quiet until Aunt Carrie came in.

"I never saw Carabel Cummins look prettier than she does in that lawn," the ponderous lady said, as she settled herself in a chair by the window. "She's like a pink flower settin' on that white stone in the cemetery."

Lena's eyes flew open. "What is she sitting there for?"

"Talkin' to Frank," said Aunt Carrie. "They're in our lot, and Carabel is pullin' a branch off the dogwood."

A spark came into the eyes of the sick woman. She murmured something and turned on her side.

But Aunt Carrie had seen the spark, and her soul was suddenly illumined.

She drew a deep breath. "Carabel always did like Frank—and he liked her. I expect if you hadn't come home from school when you did, that Carabel would have married him."

Lena turned her pale face back over her shoulder. "He never loved her," she said. "He never loved anybody but me, and he never will."

"Humph!" said Aunt Carrie.

In Lena's cheeks burned a spot of red. "And he never will," she repeated.

"How do you know?" Aunt Carrie's tone was dogged.

Lena raised herself with difficulty on her elbow. Her dark hair hung about her face, her eyes were burning. "Carabel Cummings needn't think that if anything happened to me she could get him back. She has always thought that it was because he was tied to me that he wouldn't look at her. But if I wasn't here he wouldn't look at her—I'll show her!"

She dropped back, exhausted, and Aunt Carrie's old eyes were anxious, but she persevered. "You can never tell what a man 'ull do. And you might die in the comfort of thinking that Frank was goin' to sit up there in the cemetery for the rest of his natural days, weepin' over your stone. But the chances are that it wouldn't be a week before Carabel would be settin' beside him, tellin' him how sorry she was."

Again the sick woman raised herself.

"No old maid knows anything about love—and constancy," she flung out.

A slow flush came into Aunt Carrie's cheeks. "There ain't a woman in this world," she said, "that can't give a man points on constancy. You know, and your mother knows, that Cyrus Joy died when I was twenty-one, the day before I was goin' to be married. I was as pretty as you in them days, and lots of men wanted me. But I ain't ever wanted any other but Cyrus; and somehow I expect that he'll be waitin' for me on the other side." She drew a deep breath. "But men ain't like that." "They are," Lena insisted. "Frank is."

"No, they ain't," Aunt Carrie argued. "No, they ain't. I wouldn't have expected that Cyrus would stay single for my sake, if I had gone first. He'd 'a' wanted a home and children, and somebody to make him comfortable. He'd 'a' wanted a woman around the house—they all do—and if Frank couldn't have you, why he'd get the idea of Carabel, in that pink dress, waitin' for him when he came home in the evenings, all smilin'."

"Oh!" Lena shrank from the vision of that home-coming.

Aunt Carrie got on her feet. "Well, you turn over and try to sleep, and I'll stop talkin', and 'tend to my cookin'." She creaked across the parlor floor, and stopped at the window. "The meetin's over," she said, as she went out.

Carabel came in with Frank. Her face wore an exalted look. There was a spray of dogwood against the red-gold of her hair. In Frank's button-hole was another spray. In some way, to Lena's awakened suspicions, the blossoms seemed to form between the two a subtle tie.

Carabel knelt by the bed. "We prayed, dear," she said; "we prayed hard."

Lena drew back from that "we."

"I'm tired," she said fretfully. "I want to go to sleep—Frank—"

Carabel, flushing red, rose and went out.

Aunt Carrie met her in the hall. "You

come over in the morning, Carabel," she said craftily.

But Carabel was holding her head high. "Lena doesn't seem to want me. She acts so funny."

"Sick people are queer," Aunt Carrie soothed. "But you come, Carabel."

"All right. I suppose I oughtn't to feel hurt." But her eyes were troubled.

In the sick room the shadows deepened and darkened. All night Lena lay motionless. In the big chair by the side of the bed, her husband napped and waked and napped again.

At dawn, the heavy movements of the women upstairs disturbed him. He rose, and stretched his arms above his head. As his hands dropped to his side, his eyes rested on the faded spray of dogwood in his buttonhole. He took it out, and, smiling a little, tender smile, laid it against his lips.

From under drooping lashes, the sick woman watched him, and her clinched fingers caught at the bed covering, as he went on tiptoe from the room and into the kitchen.

Aunt Carrie had come down, and was peering into the big pot, in which, on the back of the stove, the old hen had simmered all night.

Frank stuck the flowers into a small blue pitcher. "It always makes me think of Lena," he said. "It's so white and pure. Somehow, I can't bear to see it fade—I can't bear to see it fade!" He drew quick breaths, and his lips quivered.

"She's goin' to get well," Aunt Carrie asserted, as she sprinkled a handful of rice in the pot.

"I hardly dare—hope." The young man stood in the kitchen door and looked out upon the gold and amethyst of the sunrise.

"Didn't you pray for her last night?" Aunt Carrie demanded.

"I have prayed in my heart every moment," he said.

"Well, you just have faith," the old woman told him. "The Lord moves in a mysterious way." And she peppered and salted the soup.

Frank carried the dogwood back into



"I never saw Carabel Cummins look prettier than she does in that lawn."

the sick room, and set it on a table, where the flame of its reviving white seemed to sear Lena's jealous soul.

"I don't see why you let Carabel break off that tree in our lot," she said fretfully.

"Why, she wanted to, and I couldn't stop her," was his excuse.

His words struck her with something of symbolic force. If Carabel wanted him, he wouldn't know how to stop her!

"Frank," she reached out a thin hand to him, "if anything happens to me, will there ever be any one else?"

"Never!"

"You won't marry?" Her burning gaze held him.

"Oh, honey love," he parried.

"You won't?"

"How can a man promise?" His voice was very grave. "Life is long—and lonely. But why talk of it? You would always be deep in my heart, Lena."

"And some other woman in your arms! Oh!" She clung to him, sobbing. "Promise me that you won't! Promise!"

The words that she wanted were on

his lips when Aunt Carrie appeared in the doorway. "Frank," she said sharply, "come here."

He laid his wife back gently.

"You come out here in the kitchen," Aunt Carrie's manner was flurried.

But when they were in the big, hot room, she had nothing of importance to say.

She kept him there, however, on a half dozen trivial tasks. And when he went back to the sick room, Carabel was on the foot of the bed, in a blue lawn dress, that matched her eyes.

"The doctor thinks you are better," she was saying, as Frank came in. "I met him down the road."

Mrs. Stoeffler supplemented: "He thinks she is takin' more interest."

Under these comments, Lena lay inert, and when Carabel was ready to go, Frank followed her into the dining room.

"Aunt Carrie said I was to go over with you, and bring back some eggs." And, innocent of the old woman's plotting, he picked up his basket, and obeyed instructions.

After a few moments, Lena said sharply: "Mother, where's Frank?"

Mrs. Stoeffler peered out of the window. "He and Carabel are up there in the cemetery, settin' on the family stone," she reported.

"Oh!"

Presently, Mrs. Stoeffler flew into the kitchen, with the breathless bulletin: "She wants something to eat, Carrie."

Aunt Carrie ladled the savory soup into a small bowl.

"The doctor said she needed rousin',"

she chuckled, as Mrs. Stoeffler left the room.

A second excited statement was made from the sick room.

"Lena wants her hair combed."

When the girl's soft, dark braids were twined about her head, and the pink brought by excitement and hot food showed in her cheeks, the beauty that had been so long hidden began to bloom.

"Bring me my pink silk shawl," she commanded.

Aunt Carrie got it, while Mrs. Stoeffler hovered about the bed in rapture.

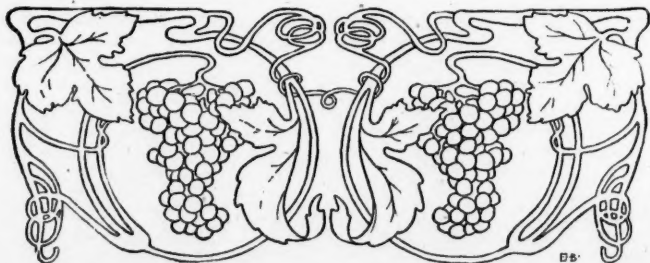
As the old aunt wrapped the rosy trifle about the girl's shoulders, she bent and kissed her. "There's some apple blossoms on the old tree," she said. "I'm going to get them for your hair."

When Frank came in, later, his wife was alone, and sitting up among her pillows. All pink and white she was, like the apple blossoms in her hair.

He knelt beside the bed, his eyes devouring her. "Honey," he cried, "you're better!"

She smiled, a smile of triumphant possession. "Yes," she said, "I'm better. I'm going to get well, Frank. I'm going to live to be eighty, like my grandmother, and like her mother; and then, if I die, you'll be too old to marry anybody else—and you and I and the baby will all be together when we get to heaven."

And, just beyond the threshold of the parlor door, the listening Aunt Carrie murmured: "Thank the Lord!" Then tiptoed silently back to the unconscious Mrs. Stoeffler.





"A PEACH OF A STORY"

BY CHARLES R. BARNES

ILLUSTRATED BY H. HAYGARTH LEONARD

EVERYBODY in the office liked Amy Davis, and, at the same time, realized that she was not a newspaper woman. She lacked that elusive something—the news appreciation, or “nose”—that is even more of the successful journalist’s equipment than his soft-lead pencil. True, she could “see” a story, but she could not see enough of them. Many, therefore, passed safely under her nose. And, more than that, she could not grasp the modern idea of singling out a fact from a situation and manipulating it to suit the paper’s demands. Perhaps this failing was a tribute to her moral fibre, but Blake, the city editor, reckoned not with such things. Amy might have been a lady burglar, for all he cared, if she had the ability to write good stories. As it was, he was constantly vexed with her because she did not deliver the goods, as he put it. So, when he banged his fist against his desk and looked scowlingly in her direction, the whole staff immediately knew that she had scored another failure.

“Miss Davis!” called Blake harshly.

The girl was writing at her desk in a far corner of the room. She turned a scared, pretty face toward him, and hastily arose, nervously adjusting the hair about her ears with her daintily tapered fingers.

“What is it, Mr. Blake?” she asked, approaching his desk.

“You’ve got to do better,” he snarled, “or I can’t have you on this paper. Here’s the last edition of the *Globe* with a first-page story on that women’s club meeting. It tells how Mrs. Carter, the president, insulted that suffragette speaker by staying away. Why didn’t we have that?”

“Because it isn’t true,” explained Amy Davis. “Mrs. Carter was called out of the city by the illness of her daughter. That’s why she wasn’t there.”

“You’re no newspaper woman,” snapped Blake testily. “You haven’t the news instinct. Mrs. Carter’s absence, in itself, was enough in this case to make a good story. The *Globe* woman evidently chose to regard that sick-daughter tale as an excuse; and she made a good, readable account of the meeting out of it. Who did the *Globe* have there?”

“Miss Norton.”

“Well, if I had my hat on, I’d take it off to her,” went on Blake, cruelly rubbing it in. “And, see here, Miss Davis, I want stories that people will read; and if you can’t deliver ‘em I’ll accept your resignation. You’ve made a good deal of a failure of it since you came on the paper, and I can’t put up with much more of it. If you can take a brace, all right, but the next story you fall down on—well, I hope you understand.”

"Yes," replied the girl, "I do."

Her face was very red and her lower lip, full and sensitive, quivered slightly. As the unfeeling, hard-featured editor indicated an end to the interview by turning to some copy, she dragged herself back to her dismal corner and let the tears drip, drip, drip on the scribbled pages over which she had so painfully toiled. Her career, so full of hope a short time ago, seemed doomed to a disgraceful termination. She was a failure, she told herself. And two weeks ago, when they had taken her from her position as assistant to the society editor to succeed Mary Masters, all was promise. Miss Masters had been brilliant enough to be called to a great New York paper, and they had thought enough of the little assistant society editor to say: "Follow her; you can make good." Yes, and now look at everything!

"Say," came a voice at her side, "was our gentlemanly boss practicing his parlor etiquette on you?"

Amy Davis looked up, dabbling her handkerchief in her wet eyes. For answer, she slowly nodded in the affirmative.

"Well, I got this to say," continued Brooks—Johnny Brooks, the staff photographer—"some day I'm going to lick him!"

The girl half smiled through her tears at the prospect of little Johnny Brooks—chubby, laughing Johnny Brooks—squaring off to the lank, big-fisted, grouchy city editor. Yet, as she again looked up into the young fellow's face, the smile died away and a comfortable feeling of thankfulness welled into her heart. In that instant, she realized that some one cared and was sorry for her; some one was unselfish enough to make her trouble his concern. And Johnny was a fine, big-hearted little fellow, even if his head barely topped her own. A great weight of loneliness seemed to drop from her, and she smiled again, this time cordially.

"Blake ought to be a penitentiary guard," went on the boy. "He has the temperament for a job like that. I

don't care when he jumps on me—he doesn't know good pictures when he sees 'em. But, Miss Davis, I can't—um—I can't stand it to see him using those teamster tactics with you. I'll—I'll— He'll have to stop it, that's all!"

Johnny Brooks grew very red in the face, and stopped. Miss Davis held his gaze for an instant, then her eyes dropped. In his she had seen something so deep and warm and tender that it half frightened her. Yet she did not resent it. In another minute, she had told herself that the boy was only most glowingly sympathetic and wonderfully thoughtful. He was showing her his chivalric side. He had been nice to her ever since she had come on the paper, and she had liked him for it.

"You're awfully kind," she said at last, very seriously, "but please don't do anything like you said. It wouldn't do any good; and perhaps I deserve a talking to, now and then—I'm so green."

"Say," he exclaimed impetuously. "you're all alone, aren't you? You haven't anybody to look after you?"

"Only my married sister," Amy Davis replied, "but it hasn't been that way long—it's only a year since father died. Maybe my loneliness makes my work poor. I've sometimes thought that I should be more cheerful—my head might work better then."

Young Mr. Brooks looked at her very hard. Deep thought was taking place in his brain. Presently, he burst forth:

"Why didn't you study stenography, or something like that? You're not cut out for this business. It's too hard and cruel and heartless for you. You're too nice for it. It's full of lies and treachery and—all sorts of rotten things."

"But I haven't found it so," she protested. "My work has been nice—meetings and a few slum stories and interviews and such things. I like it."

"You just wait," he warned. "You'll get the rough side of it pretty soon; I mean the side that goes against a person with a fine nature, like you've got. I heard Blake giving it to you

because you didn't lie about some women's club thing. What does he care about the truth? Nothing! All he wants is something sensational that people will read. That's all he wants, and he doesn't care how you get it, or whom it hurts. If it's news he prints it, and if it's what he calls good stuff it goes on the first page. Just wait. Some time you'll have to write something that will ruin some man or break some woman's heart. Could you do that?"

"They wouldn't ask me to, would they?" she questioned anxiously.

He laughed.

"Just wait," he told her. "If something doesn't come up he'll be after you to ferret out something—something somebody did a long time ago and is sorry for. Nothing is sacred to him, Miss Davis. What he wants is stories. And haven't you ever heard him say: 'Stories about people, that's what I want you to bring in!'"

"I haven't been here very long," Amy said. "He hasn't done much but scold me."

"I wish you didn't have to work, and could live at home." There was deep sincerity in Johnny Brooks' voice. "Honest, I wish it. But, as long as you're here, make the best of it, and don't let what he says worry you. He bluffs a lot. So-long, now. I got some plates to develop—he wants the pictures for the first edition tomorrow. Cheer up!" And he backed away toward his tiny dark room, leaving her so encouraged that she smiled bravely at the tear-spotted copy on her desk, and resolved to make one more



"Was our gentlemanly boss practicing his parlor etiquette on you?"

good try at this complex and difficult newspaper work.

She was new enough to the life to find deep interest in the stories to which she was assigned; and the little feature she had before her—a slum tale—was strong enough in the human element to drive Blake out of her mind for the time. She wrote rapidly, her big gray eyes narrowing at the tense points, her low, white brow wrinkling over the selection of a word. A lock of golden-brown hair escaped its tether, and dangled untidily on her cheek, but she did not heed it. She felt that Blake would like this story. So she wrote and wrote, unmindful of the passing minutes, until she was again conscious of the voice at her elbow.

"Suppose you and I take a car ride for some fresh air," suggested Johnny Brooks, "and then we'll have dinner afterward—what?"

"Oh, I'm expected home," she objected.

"Telephone," laconically advised Johnny.

"Maybe I could," she mused.

"I'll call the number for you," he volunteered, stepping to a near-by desk telephone.

"It's Walnut, one-five-four-nine," she informed him.

And so, the gloom that had settled down at the day's close parted to let through a warming gleam of sunshine. Like two children, the staff photographer and the abused little newspaper woman trotted out of the office, and boarded a suburban car. And, during the long ride in the brisk November air, and the dinner in a cheap French restaurant that followed, Amy Davis forgot her misery in a babble of shop talk and gossip of the newspaper world. She was blissfully contented when Johnny took leave of her at her door.

"I've always wanted to take you somewhere," he said, quite boyishly.

"You've made me enjoy myself very much," she told him.

"Sometimes," he argued seriously, "you meet people and you like them right away—you know you're going to like them always. And it was that way about you. I wanted to know you better the minute I saw you. I'm all alone, like you are, and it's a bum way of living along—don't you think so?"

"Yes, I do," she agreed, in all sincerity; and in her heart there was not even the suspicion of coquetry. They were on the common ground of the lonely.

"Well, then," he went on, "let's go on more of these little toots around town. They get our minds off our work—and away from ourselves."

"Mr. Brooks," said Amy Davis, with a laugh in her eyes, "I've had such a nice time that I'll surely go if I am asked again."

Johnny Brooks evidently regarded this statement in the light of a dare, for he asked and asked and asked. The weeks grew into a month. Amy Davis' work grew somewhat better. It was brighter in style and more accurate; but even the copy readers who

liked her were forced to admit that she fell far short of the mark. Young Mr. Brooks, whose work took him out with the trained reporters on big stories, sought to coach her. He knew instinctively the points in a news item, and he made long speeches on journalism over the dinners they had together. But the girl was slow to grasp the essential features of her work.

"Sometimes," she told Johnny, "I dread going out on stories. One has to be so bold."

"I tell you," he rejoined, "it's no place for you, that newspaper office. You belong in a home, somewhere, mending things, and making calls, and tending to—" He stopped, and blushed. "I mean, you're a domestic, womanly woman, you are, and you're out of place in a howling city room. But, since you're there, nothing would suit me better than to see you make good. I'd like to see you put it all over the whole gang before you're through."

She remembered that. In a way, it provided her with a motive for trying. She began to reflect on how nice it would be to show Johnny—especially Johnny—and the others, that she could make a success of it. But Johnny thought no more about it; in fact, he had forgotten his end of the conversation when they started out again for dinner. They had gone to the big Wallamook, the highest-priced hotel in the city, for it was Saturday, and pay day. During the meal, Johnny looked longingly into the pretty, oval face across the table from him. And when the waiter brought the tiny cups of black coffee, he suddenly leaned forward in his chair, the old expression, deep and warm and tender, burning in his eyes.

"Amy," he said eagerly, "we might have something like this in our own home—I know how to make coffee," he added lamely.

Amy Davis did not laugh. Instead, she twisted a ring on her little finger, round and round and round. After a moment, she said:

"I'd like it, Johnny—lots." Her voice, which trembled slightly, grew

steadier. "Indeed I would, Johnny. I know that there's more to what you were saying—"

"I can't get along without you," he whispered fiercely. "I've cared—I've loved you ever since you got called, that day. Why, the very ground you walk on is—say, did you know I stole one of your rubbers? I've got it home. You never gave me a picture."

"I will—to-night," she said, a warm color in her face. "And I'll be engaged to you, Johnny, if you want me to. I—care—that way, too. But I'd rather have you proud of me before we—before we have our own house. Let me have a chance, Johnny."

"Now, look here," he began, mightily important with new authority, "I don't want you to stick around down there at the office. I don't care about your being a star reporter. I want you just as you are, Amy. I got seven hundred in the bank and I get twenty-five a week from the paper, and about fifteen on the outside, and we can make a start on that—"

"Not now," she interrupted, "not now, please, Johnny. I'm not proud of myself as I am, and I know that nobody is proud of me. People are valued at the estimate they put upon themselves. I know what people think of me. Give me a month. The minute Mr. Blake says I've done something worth while, we'll—we'll have this"—she included the table in a sweeping glance—"all to ourselves."

Johnny Brooks gave in, chiefly because there was nothing else to do. For the first time he noticed a decided firmness in Amy Davis' chin and conceived a wholesome respect for it. He was more pleased than disconcerted at this discovery, for he reasoned that his fiancée's determination would soon force the laudatory words from the crabbed Blake. So, during the little dinners at the cheap restaurant that followed the splurge at the Wallamook, the topic of marriage was avoided, Johnny contenting himself with counting the days, and Amy busying her brain with schemes to gain her desire. One night, after she had been out all

day on a difficult assignment, she met Johnny by appointment, and they were soon talking across a white tablecloth.

"It's a good thing you weren't in today," Johnny said. "Blake was crazy about that Raffles' story."

"I heard something about it," said Amy. "What was it?"

"Oh, somebody swiped about two thousand dollars' worth of furs and things at Mrs. Glenmore's party last night," he explained. "They were taken out of the cloakroom while everybody was at dinner. But the funny thing about it is that the whole story is only a rumor. Mrs. Glenmore denies that anything was stolen, and the police say that the robbery wasn't reported. So the boss can't print anything, though he's mighty certain that the robbery happened. He's had his best men out on it all day. Nothing doing. Why, he had Bill Naylor and Julkins, the political man, and all the rest of 'em digging it up and they all fell down." Johnny rattled out the story with a relish, evidently not at all sorry for the city editor in his dilemma.

"It must be aggravating," commented Amy.

"Sure it is," confirmed Johnny, "but it's a good thing. It'll show Blake that there are some things that can't be done."

"But can't this be done?" she innocently inquired.

"Of course it can't," he promptly replied. "If it could be those star men would have done it. Why, Naylor even went up there, dressed like a farmer, and tried to get a job as hired man. While he was doing it he questioned every servant he saw and tried to bribe 'em to tell something, but they seemed afraid to mention the subject."

"Was that the way to go about it?" Amy asked.

"Naylor's a pretty good man," averred Johnny. Then he suddenly looked at her keenly. "Do you think you could get it?" he asked.

"Yes, I do," replied the girl. "I think I could get Mrs. Glenmore to tell me all about it if Mr. Blake would assign me to the story. Would he?"



"Sometimes I dread going out on stories. One has to be so bold."

"Ask him to-morrow," suggested Johnny Brooks. "He's in the mood to try anything."

Amy winced at this, but she would not let the young gentleman opposite know that he had hurt her. Through the dinner she talked of the Glenmore affair, drawing from Johnny all the information he could give her. When she left him that night, she said:

"I'm going to try it, anyway. What do you wish me?"

"Luck," answered the boy dutifully, though he had small faith in the feasibility of her venture.

A very much surprised city editor listened doubtfully and grumpily next morning to a stammered request from the poor little incompetent, to be sent out on the Glenmore mystery.

"I'll raise your salary if you get that story," he said at length.

And that was all the audible comment he made. As Amy left the room, he turned petulantly to his work, grumbling and casting black looks in the direction of Naylor and Julkins. He

was angry with them for failing him; and he had cardiac palpitations every time he took up a new edition of the *Globe*. He knew that, at any moment, the rival sheet might come out with the facts that he was unable to get. And he was exceedingly embittered because of his helpless position.

Amy Davis left the office with an idea, and that was all. She was not at all certain of success, yet her plan seemed a much better one than snooping around servants' entrances. It would take her, with a plausible excuse, direct to the mistress of the house. And then she must trust to her ability as an actress to drag admissions from Mrs. Glenmore. As she walked slowly from the office to the shopping district, she pondered carefully over the situation, attacking her plan from all sides for a flaw, after the manner of the truly great. By the time she had reached one of the big department stores, she was convinced that there were more chances for success than failure. So she entered the place, and

made her way at once to the handkerchief counter.

"I want good ones," she told the girl. And soon her woman's soul was lost in delight over heaps upon heaps of fine, filmy laces and expensive weaves.

"Here are some at twenty-five dollars each," said the saleswoman. Amy looked at them, and fingered over those marked lower. Finally, she selected one at twelve dollars and a half.

"I'll take this one," she said.

She did not have it wrapped up, but kept it in her hand, to the surprise of the saleswoman, who found it difficult to associate the demure, plainly gowned girl with the everyday use of such expensive finery. On the way to the Glenmore home, Amy repeatedly wadded the handkerchief into a ball, and then smoothed it out. When she alighted from the car, about two blocks from the house, she deliberately dropped the delicate fabric on the pavement, where it became slightly soiled. Then she sauntered slowly toward the entrance. There she paused and stooped, as if picking up something. And, taking a deep breath, she set her teeth tightly together, walked sturdily to the door, and rang the bell. A servant opened the door.

"I wish to see Mrs. Glenmore," she said. "I have found something that may belong to her."

The man went away, and, returning, led Amy into the library, where Mrs. Glenmore received her.

"I live around the corner, on Centre Street," Amy began hesitatingly.

Instinctively, she liked the grave, kindly faced woman who greeted her so civilly. Quickly, she took in the erect figure, the small, well-kept hands, the aristocratic poise of the head, and the fine gray streakings in the hair. A hot wave of shame because of her deceit swept through her, but she resolutely proceeded.

"I live just around the corner," she repeated. She was confused. An outraged sense of right and wrong, due to the base deception she was practicing

on this gentlewoman, tortured her. Mrs. Glenmore looked at her curiously.

"Yes," she questioned pleasantly.

"I heard," Amy went on, smothering her conscience, "that you had some things stolen, and I found something as I was passing." She opened her hand, and exposed the handkerchief.

Mrs. Glenmore, taken entirely off her guard, reached out a hand for it.

"Of course," Amy continued, relinquishing it, "perhaps it doesn't belong to you or any of the guests who were here; but it is so much finer than ordinary handkerchiefs that I thought I had better inquire. I found it lying beside one of those stone pillars at the entrance."

"I don't know who may have lost it," said Mrs. Glenmore slowly, slipping the bit of cloth through her fingers. "Some things were stolen that night, but I had no report of this. Everything has been found and returned." She sighed and gazed in abstraction for a minute at a row of books on the table. "But if you will leave this with me," she went on, "I shall make inquiries."

"You may do as you think best with it," said Amy. Then she added: "It must have been very embarrassing for you—the robbery. Everybody in the neighborhood felt very sorry for you—even as far away as I live."

"It was very unfortunate," said Mrs. Glenmore. "The property of my guests was taken—some furs. The police found them the next day, and everything was restored to its owner. Of course, you must regard this as confidential. I have had considerable trouble in keeping it out of the papers."

Amy Davis' head swam. She had the story! She had succeeded where the best men on the paper had failed. For a brief instant, she saw the paper as it would come out, the first page black with headlines—and it would be her story! It was a beautiful beat, worthy of the highest class intellects in journalism. She felt elated, dizzy with the clever success of it. She wanted to sing, to float above mundane things, to grasp the banner of vic-

tory, and wave it. The intoxicating spell of the beat, known to all journalists worthy of the name, was upon her.

For a full minute, she stared at Mrs. Glenmore with unseeing eyes, as her blood raced through her excited body. Then she arose, and was about to take her leave, when a high, cackling, foolish laugh sounded in the hall. The next instant the draperies parted, and a young man with a leering, heavy, idiotic face entered.

"Ha! Ha!" he giggled. "Clever little girl! She's got you, all right, mater. I know who she is. Saw her a week ago in the Wallamook dining room. They told me that she's a reporter for the *News*. Ha! Ha! Ha! Clever work—clever work!"

He came unsteadily into the room and dropped heavily in a chair. Amy saw that he was not himself. The strong odor of alcohol explained it. She glanced quickly at the other woman. A look of death was on her face. Her left hand was pressed against her heart and her breath came in little gasps.

"Edward," she whispered, "please leave the room."

"Pretty soon," he temporized, "pretty soon. Want to give the little girl a nice article for paper. She's a good, classy reporter, she is. Always 'ncourage ability, mater; always 'ncourage it. Whee, didn't she fool you though, mater? Say"—he leered at Amy—"I'm Raffles—me!" He arose and stood before her, bowing, his hand against his breast. "Me," he continued, "I'm Raffles. I stole the stuff. Miss Reporter, lemme present Mr. Raffles—pleased—charmed—"

"Edward!" came from the ashen lips of the mother.

"It's all right—all right," babbled the man. "Little girl came here for a sensation, and no gentleman would refuse lady anything. I'm a sensation, mater, because I'm Raffles. And I want everybody to know it before I use this."

He jerked a stubby blue automatic pistol from his pocket. Mrs. Glenmore screamed, and Amy leaped to her feet in alarm. There were sounds of hurrying

feet in the hall. Young Glenmore waited until a maid and a manservant peeped cautiously through the draperies, then he pointed the pistol vaguely in their direction.

"Keep away—keep away!" he warned. "Just doing a little monologue, that's all." Then, to Amy: "I won't be on earth to-night. You see, I'm no good. Old man found it out before I did, so he shut down on the money supply. That's why I stole and got a low-browed friend of mine to market the swag. Ha! Ha! Swag! That's a regular burglar word—what? Hear the technical talk. I guess there's some class to me. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Mrs. Glenmore arose, and tottered toward Amy.

"Go, go!" she gasped. Then she reeled, and dropped in a pitiful heap to the floor, in merciful unconsciousness.

It never was quite clear to Amy Davis how she fled from that house. She had a confused recollection of the babbling young man waving his pistol, of servants running and shouting, of some one raving at a telephone, demanding a doctor. After a while, when she was calmer, she realized that she was on a flat-wheeled street car, rolling jerkily toward the busy heart of the city. When she arrived in the midst of the tall buildings, she left the car and rushed into a drug store. Still trembling because of the ordeal through which she had gone, she called the office and asked for Johnny Brooks, who happened to be in his dark room.

"It's Amy," she told him, "and I want to see you right away. I'm in the Central Drug Store. All right, I'll wait."

When he arrived, almost on a run, she stepped out of the place and made him walk with her in the jostling crowds. Then, as they bumped and elbowed their way along, she told him the story of the morning.

"I've got the biggest story I ever heard of," she concluded.

Johnny Brooks eyed her queerly.

"What are you going to do with it?" he asked.



"Miss Reporter, lemme present Mr. Raffles—pleased—charmed—"

She was silent while they walked the length of a block.

"Johnny Brooks," she said presently, "if I write that story and it is printed, it will break that woman's heart, won't it?"

"No," replied Johnny, with apparent unconcern, "it will probably kill her."

"And it will disgrace Mr. Glenmore, won't it? I'm not worrying about the young fellow—he isn't worth considering."

"Well," said Johnny, "I wouldn't like to be Glenmore if that thing is published. But, gee, Amy, it's a peach of a story!"

Amy turned a corner abruptly.

"You're coming with me to the office," she said.

And almost in silence they walked the few blocks to the *News* headquarters and climbed the dingy stairs to the editorial room. Amy went directly to the city editor's desk.

"Mr. Blake," she began, in a low, quiet voice, "I came to offer my resignation."

Blake looked at her hard. Then he did an unheard-of thing. He grinned.

"Pretty rotten situation up there, eh?" he hazarded.

Amy flushed.

"I couldn't write a thing like that, Mr. Blake," she said. "I just couldn't. But I got the story," she added modestly.

"I know you did," he told her, "or you wouldn't be talking that way. I know all about it. Old Glenmore was in to see the old man, and—well, the old man came up and told me the story. Also, he said: 'Don't use a line of it.' And when we remember that old Glenmore's richer than a trust, we figure on what easily might have happened between him and the old man, and we wish that we were well enough fixed to tell journalism to go to the——"

He paused, and looked her full in the eyes.

"Let me say, Miss Davis, that I admire you more than any woman who ever worked for me," he went on. "Most of 'em would have been tickled to death to write an article that would forever blight that family in this town. I've ruined a lot of people in my time, Miss Davis, and I have no excuse to offer. But I hold that such dirty work isn't for a woman to do. It's for caloused, no-good fellows, like myself. And I'm glad that you resigned. I am going to accept your resignation, and I know that I am doing you a good turn. Get out of this business, Miss Davis, and get into something that won't spoil your womanliness. You can't stay in it, and see the tough side of life all the time, without it having its effect on you. Stay at home, and do tatting, or whatever it is that women occupy their time with. If you get the chance to marry a good man, do it. Don't bother with what you girls call a career. The only proper career for a girl like you is taking care of a home. And now, I hope you'll excuse a cranky old party for butting into your affairs with a heart-to-heart talk. Of course, you won't pay any attention to it; nobody ever does take advice."

"But I'm going to, Mr. Blake," Amy Davis cried unexpectedly.

She looked around for Johnny, who had been standing against the wall, near the stock ticker. He came forward.

"I'm ready now, Johnny," she said.

Blake gazed at the two young people, and swore softly under his breath.

"Now, what do you think of that?" he exclaimed, so loudly that the copy readers heard and looked up, wondering.

The next instant the city editor was scribbling something on a piece of copy paper. When he had finished, he handed the sheet to Johnny Brooks.

"It's an order for expense money and a week's salary in advance," he explained. "I'm going to send you to Washington to take pictures of—oh, of any old thing! I don't care what you take, or whether you take any at all, or not. I guess it's as good a place as any for a honeymoon, isn't it?"

"It suits me," said Johnny Brooks.

"And I've always wanted to go there," chimed in Amy Davis, quite gravely.

"Well," commanded Blake, lapsing into his accustomed surliness, "don't stand there and miss your train. Get out of here. Can't you see I'm busy?"



UP MAY HILL

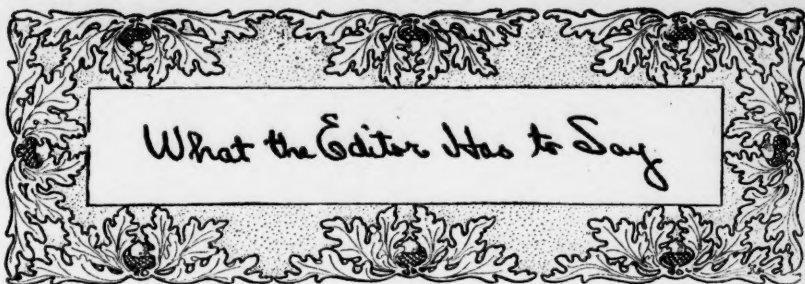
MAY HILL is hard to climb," they sigh;
"Then take it fair and slow," say I.

For, spite of hazy, lazy heat,
The grass blows cool against our feet,
The cherry boughs are deep in snow,
And where it falls we wander, Sweet!

A loveless climb were hard indeed,
But you are here to help my speed;
And, if you falter by the way,
My arm shall comfort you at need.

O greening slope against the sky,
Your top is reached too soon, say I!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



What the Editor Has to Say

NEXT month's SMITH's will contain one of the most charming complete novels we have read in a long time. We read a great many stories every week, more than we like to remember sometimes, and we must, to a certain extent, have become hardened and dulled to the effect of new impressions. We have often tried to imagine the sensations of those who read or heard the first piece of fiction that was ever created. It must have been long ago. Probably a shaggy cave man told it to his wife and friends. It might have been a nature story about some mammoth he had seen or killed. It was told in guttural grunts, but the eyes of the other cave folk must have opened a little wider and gleamed a little more brightly as they listened to this new thing, which must have been, indeed, wonderful, as it was the progenitor of all the novels, stories, and poems that have been written through all the long ages since.

OF course, the first love story came much later, but still, it was very long ago—before the Bible was written, before the Pyramids were built. The girl who read it first, or heard it first, must have had some thrills on that occasion. Her sensibilities had not been deadened by the reading of many manuscripts, as we sometimes fear ours are. And this brings us back to S. Carleton's novel, "The Unconsidered Mary," which is to appear complete in the June number of SMITH's. When we turned the first few pages of the manuscript,

we felt as if this was really one of the first stories we had ever read. It was so young, so fresh, so vivid, so filled with the glamour of springtime and romance.

THE scene is laid on the island of Hermosa. There is such an island, really, but Hermosa is not its name. S. Carleton has been there, and says that it is such a delightful place that, some day, she would like to live there "for keeps," herself, but she won't tell its name, as she doesn't want too many people to know about it. Anyway, it is somewhere in the West Indies, and if you want to take a spring vacation, under blue skies and with the scent of roses and the perfume of idleness in the air, you can do it all without so much as climbing out of the hammock on your own front porch. S. Carleton will take you there, and introduce you to a great many charming and interesting people into the bargain. If, when you read this story, you find that it does not do all we have claimed that it would, will you not write to us and tell us so? We shall be surprised if we get any letters to that effect.

A WRITER, whose stories have appeared frequently in *Ainslee's*, *Everybody's*, and other magazines, is Elizabeth Newport Hepburn. She has just written her first story for SMITH's. It will appear in the June issue, and it is called "A Sacrifice to Diana." The word "sacrifice"

has not altogether a pleasant sound. If you are at all like us, you associate it with doing something that you do not want to do, or not doing something that you did want to do very much. There are those who do not believe in self-sacrifice, who argue that the individual owes something to herself, as well as to others, and that a stifling of one's own personality often does more harm than good, and is productive of nothing but unhappiness in the long run. We don't like the doctrine. It may harmonize well with certain modern creeds and philosophical cults, but we hate to believe it. We like to think that self-sacrifice is worth while sometimes, and that there are things in the world far higher and better than the obvious and material gain. Please read "A Sacrifice to Diana" next month. It is a splendid short story, but it is something beside, and more than that. It has in it inspiration, and if you have ever made sacrifices yourself, which in weaker moments you are inclined to regret, the reading of it will make you a little better satisfied with life as it is.

HAVE you enjoyed "The Reminiscences of Katie," as told to Anne O'Hagan? There is another unusually good installment coming next month, the best yet, in our opinion. Also, next month, there is a delightful short story by Hildegard Hawthorne, who has already written one good story for SMITH'S, and is going to write many more good ones, we hope, in the future. This new story, which appears next month, is "Pittsburg Peggy Turns Missionary." Pittsburg Peggy is a rather notorious person, of uncertain age, who once upon a time was good, and still retains some traces of it underneath an unusually unpromising exterior. She meets, in New York, a young lady who feels very badly, and who has good reason for feeling so. She has come to the city to become an actress, and has found it a great deal harder and more unpleasant than she had imagined it would be even in her most pessimistic moments.

DO you remember a story called "Philanthropy," which appeared some time ago in this magazine? Or another called "Theology," which appeared a little later, and was written by the same author, Marion Hill? If you remember, they were about two girls, Santa and Agnes, who had reached the age of girlhood, which may be best described as the superlatively silly one. We were very much interested in both these girls, and have hoped to hear more about them. They were very funny, unconsciously, of course, very human, and very true to a certain phase of feminine adolescence. There's another story about them in SMITH'S for next month. "Morality" is the name, and you have something yet to learn on this subject, as you will find when you hear Santa discourse upon it.

THERE'S another good short story, "The Test of a Man," in the June SMITH'S, by Virginia Middleton, with whose work you are already well acquainted. Then, of course, there is another Holman F. Day story, and some more funny verse by Wallace Irwin. This time Mr. Irwin tells us some "Aëro Gossip." Then there is a sermonette by Charles Battell Loomis, "On Americanism," and half a dozen or more short stories which we have not mentioned, but which are all well worth reading and talking about.

WE will have an important announcement to make next month in regard to a new serial. For some time we have been trying hard to secure something worthy to follow Howard Fielding's story, "The Great Conspirator," which was completed a few months ago. We have it now. The author is Rupert Hughes, author of "Zal," a great many notable short stories, and half a dozen plays. It is the biggest thing Mr. Hughes has ever done—but we will tell you more about it next month.



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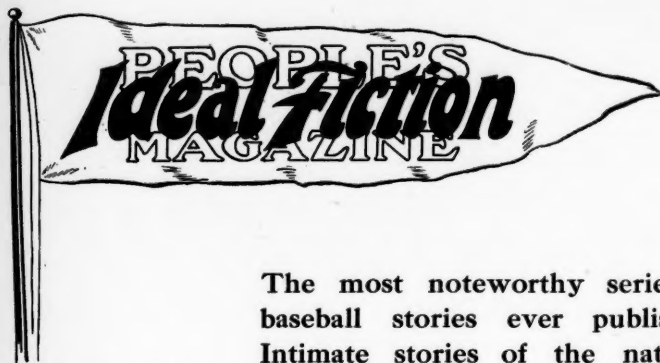


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June Number

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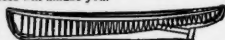
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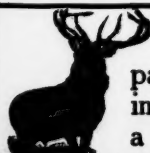
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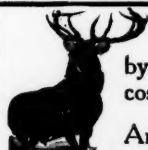


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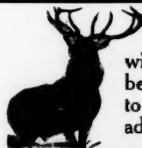


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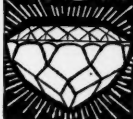
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